DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 219 IR 011 538

TITLE	Communication and Participation: Freedoms and Constraints of the Audio-Visual. Proceedings of the Colloquy (Charleroi, Belgium, March 1981).
INSTITUTION	Council for Cultural Cooperation, Strasbourg (France).
PUB DATE	81
NOTE	89p.; Small and also some faint print.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Audiovisual Communications; Community Programs; Computers; *Cultural Activities; Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Information Dissemination; *Mass Media; Mass Media Effects; *Technological Advancement; Technology Transfer; *Telecommunications
IDENTIFIERS	Entertainment; *Europe

ABSTRACT

Papers and reports are presented from a colloquy that was a culminating project of the European Council for Cultural Cooperation. In "Public Participation, Self Expression of Groups and Individuals," Paul Beaud discusses the concepts of community media and the new media. "The Evolution of the Great Communication Networks," by Sean MacReamoinn, relates the present crisis in telecommunications to developments in new technology and audiovisual media, organizational changes occurring in the major networks, and the financial arrangements involved in these changes. Reports of four working groups are presented by Holde Lhoest (Information), Margareta Ingelstam (Education), Peter M. Lewis (Entertainment), and Monique Sauvage (Culture). A general report by Henry Ingberg emphasizes that the traditional divisions of the functions of radio and television (information, education, entertainment, and culture) do not correspond to recent developments in the electronic media. Ingberg discusses new technologies, media mergers and centralization, audience fragmentation, profit and non-profit participation in the media, public service, and the contributions of four working groups. Appendices include a draft resolution on "Cultural Development and Electronic Media" and a list of colloquy participants. (LMM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

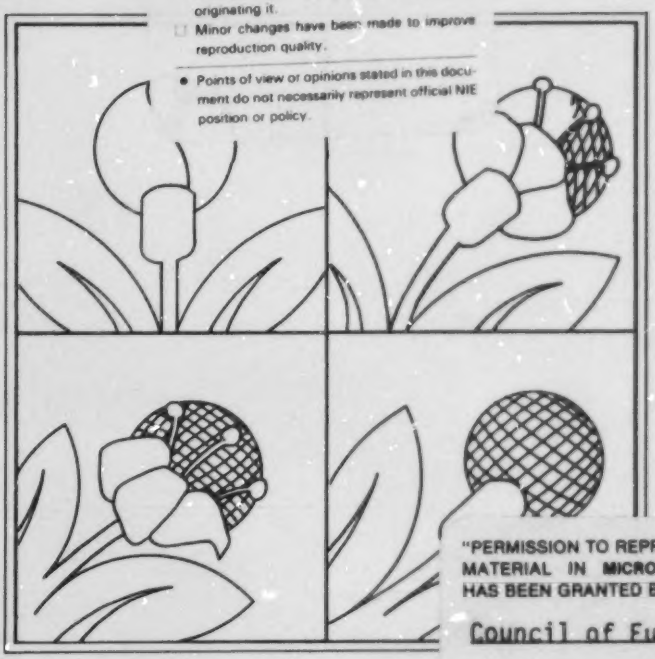
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED254219



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Council of Europe

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Communication and Participation: Freedoms and Constraints of the Audio-visual

Charleroi, 1981

Ministry of the French-speaking Community
of Belgium
Council of Europe

IR011538

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLLOQUY

COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION: FREEDOMS AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA

Charleroi, March 1981

Council of Europe

Council for Cultural Co-operation
1981

E 50.398
04.7

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Introductory papers

- Public participation, self-expression of groups and individuals 5
- The evolution of the great communication networks 14

Working Groups 26

- Information 27
- Education 36
- Entertainment 49
- Culture 56

General report 60

Appendices

I. Draft resolution
"Cultural development and electronic media" 79

II. List of participants 84

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

In 1973 the Council of Europe sponsored the publication in the series "Les Grands Rapports" (1) a book by Robert Wangermée and Holde Lhoest, entitled "L'Après-Télévision, une antimythologie de l'audiovisuel". This book, which was the joint product of discussion among international experts comparing their forecasts, sought to answer such major questions as :Technology now provides ways of transmitting images cable, satellite, video which arrive on the television screen and will give rise to new forms of television different from those of today. What will they be like? What programmes will they produce? Who will make them?

The book also described the development of these new channels of communication and the experiments carried out in some countries in community television, service television, free video, videographe, back-channel TV, multi-media education. It also defined objectives and strategies, and proposed means of development.

The Council for Cultural Co-operation, which commissioned this work, has continued the venture thus initiated for over 7 years, and the following is in some respects a culmination of it. Since 1978 it has been advised by a small group of experts nominated by member states (2) who conducted the project along three lines: the organisation of colloquies and symposia on the new media, fact-finding visits to observe original audio-visual experiments in Europe, and the publication of monographs and reports.

The 1975 Paris colloquy dealt with socio-cultural aspects of cable television and video. In 1976, at Copenhagen, European experts met at the invitation of the Council of Europe to discuss "Understanding television - Research and broadcaster: co-operation, conflict, compromise", whilst in 1977 another group of eminent specialists sought to stimulate creativity through an original experiment by French-speaking Switzerland's

---

(1) Hachette Littérature, Paris, 1973, 168 pages.

(2) The group was known as Project Group No.6: Culture and Media, and was composed of specialists nominated by the governments of the following member states: Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

educational radio and television. In December 1978 a first symposium took place in Liège, on public participation in experiments in decentralisation of audio-visual media, cable TV, local and regional radio, multi-media animation centres.

This meeting was chaired by Mr Robert Wangermée, Director General of the Belgian French-language community's Radio and Television Authority (RTBF), and attended by experts from some 20 European countries: representatives of governments and national radio and television authorities, local media officials and broadcasters, communication sociologists, etc.

In addition to the proceedings of the symposium, the Council for Cultural Co-operation has published a report entitled "Community media?" (3), which summarises the main points of the discussions and preparatory studies and also includes a bibliography.

The ground had been prepared for the symposium by several meetings between media specialists and cultural policy officials and by fact-finding visits to a number of projects. Five visits were made by members of the project group, using a common guide for their European survey, which covered successively two Belgian experiments in local community television, free radio in Italy, radio, local TV and video experiments in the Netherlands, two local TV experiments in the United Kingdom and local radio schemes in Ireland and Sweden.

Their observations were recorded in a report entitled: "Alternative kinds of radio and television" (4).

Lastly, the members of Project Group No. 6, who were responsible for choosing and organising these visits, in the course of three sessions, drafted a resolution entitled "Cultural development and the electronic media" the text of which is appended.

---

(3) Paul Beaud, "Community Media? Local radio and television and audio-visual animation experiments in Europe", Council of Europe, Education and Culture, Strasbourg, 1980, 189 pages.

(4) Patrice Flichy, "Alternative kinds of radio and television - A Council of Europe enquiry" Council for Cultural Co-operation, Strasbourg, 1980, 20 pages.

Their efforts, harmoniously guided by Mr Henry Ingberg, ended with the preparation of the general programme for the Charleroi Colloquy, the proceedings of which are presented below.

Jean Raty
Secretary of the "Culture and Media"
Project

Introductory Papers

Public participation, self expression of groups and individuals

by

Paul Beaud

Lecturer
University of Lausanne
(Switzerland)

For those who, like historians or sociologists, are concerned with the genesis of ideas and ideologies, the dictionary wrongly remains a neglected instrument. Nothing could be more thought-provoking, when seeking confirmation of the meaning or spelling of some word, than to compare the definitions of the same term in a recent "Petit Robert" and a "Petit Larousse" published 20 or 30 years before.

"Participation", for example. The Larousse is as tautologically brief as it is evasive: *"fem. sub. Action of participating; its result: 'participation in a crime'"*. Robert, *aggiornamento oblige*, repeats the self-evident but pads it out with variants (collaboration, assistance, complicity, connivance, contribution) and gives additional examples: *"Democracy is participation, with equal rights, on an equal footing in the framing of laws and in the government of the nation"*. This quotation from Lamartine is supplemented, with particulars of origin (1968), by *"The right of everyone in a community who was bound by its laws and regulations, to inspect, freely discuss and intervene. See also contestation"*.

What subtlety in the use of the imperfect, "was bound by its laws"... Before 1968 (as in "BC"), the law, the regulations (*"See also arbitrary prerogative*, Robert would add) ruled unchallenged; post-1968 began the era of participation and contestation, relegating Lamartine to the dustbins of the history of middle-class democracy. But he need not be too unhappy about it; other people may well find themselves in the same place before long, if only for relegating him.

Anyone who has followed the work on "community media" sponsored by the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe in the last ten years might be forgiven for asking himself, from time to time, whether "participation" itself should not now be used in the imperfect. Engrossed

in their research, or their experiments with local media, or their political and administrative responsibilities in implementin the decentralisation of communication systems, people may not always have noticed the advent of fresh, socio-economic imperatives, in which their immediate subjects of concern might often seem to have no place. Looking back, however, we see that this temporary blind-spot may prove to be a good thing - call it blindness, or idealism, as you please; it prevented a debate that originated at exactly the same time as modern political society from being purely and simply discarded. Now that the laws of the market (economic, cultural, scientific or political, it hardly matters which) are compelling many ex-specialists in communicative participation (or is it the other way round?) to retrain at top speed in telematics, space telecommunications or the study of the oligopolistic monstors of the culture industry, it is essential, almost because of the very irrelevance of the questions we were asking yesterday, and because there are still no answers to them today, that we do not abandon the problems that formed the substance of those ten years of work, however trivial the issues may sometimes have seemed as we worked our way through our unfinished experiments, militant depressions or sense of our own empty-handedness in the face of the demand for universal participation. But even though it is a natural tendency of stocktaking to end in an epitaph and sound like an obituary - why else would we feel the need to take stock? - problems, fortunately, are highly resistent to bureaucratic planning, which would like to be able to programme neatly their appearance and disappearance.

New media, same old questions

In 1965, speaking of Wagner, on whom he had written a devastating essay 13 years before. Adorn moderated his earlier fulminations, which had been marked by still fresh memories of Fascist barbarity, and concluded that *"The way to adopt a correct attitude towards a work of art is not to adapt the art to a new situation, as it is called, but to identify that which, in the art, causes one to react differently in response to history"* .

What is true of works of art is true of ideas. The concept of community media has a very brief history, and any looking back must be written in the present and future tenses, relating, as it does, to a span of time extending from "light-weight"

video - that almost archaic velocipede of the audio-visual - to the cassette video-tape recorder, videotex, teleinformatics and the satellite. Its history is also that of the changing meanings of participation. The connotations of the term (see above, collaboration, assistance, complicity, connivance, contribution) must not make us forget that it refers to the overall organisation of society, to its representation, to society's relationship with itself. If we re-read today the conclusions drawn two years ago at the Liège Colloquy after a decade of experimenting with public access to modern communication media, we find that an investigation, the limited material of which was to be a handful of experiments scattered throughout Europe, proves relevant today on a very different scale, however little else may be said about it, because it has to do with the political and economic choices that affect every social mediation that is, with the media as we have seen them in the past, with access to learning and with relationships to learning as a productive force and component in a balance of power. The fact that several of our conclusions regarding access to the automated data processing were echoed in the famous French ("Nora-Minc") report on the computerisation of society is proof that those ten years of thought and investigation were more than a trip to cloud-cuckoo-land (1). Let us briefly review the salient points.

o

o o

The loosening or total severance of social bonds is a theme that has been running through philosophico-sociological literature, politics and their watered-down journalistic forms for several years. Whatever the cause, or rather designation (disappearance of the meta-social guarantees of the social order, dissolution of the great tales of explanation and justification, death of ideologies), the image of the post-modern society that now prevails is of a system struggling against

---

(1) In a chapter entitled "Télématique et nouveaux jeux de pouvoirs" the authors of L'Informatisation de la société distinguish three models for the development of computerisati (deconcentrated, decentralised, autonomous), corresponding to the categories I shall consider below in regard to the media, with reference to both the purely organisational aspect and to the general social implications of one or another choice among these models.

growing entropy and governed by paradox (over-organisation secreting anomy, massification and individualism etc), in which the confrontation of collective representations has been engulfed by the spectacularisation of the political, and class ethics have been overwhelmed by the ethics of consumption; it is the image of a Brownian society traversed by random currents (see Jean Baudrillard's thesis on the end of the social and the silence of the masses, in contrast to the noise of the media) or administered by sheer expedients, with performance as the sole criterion, or by ephemeral contracts between partners brought together by a concensus that may stand here-and-now but not tomorrow (a position defended by Jean-François Lyotard in particular). In more prosaic terms, this means the decrease or actual demise of any form of social participation, generalised absenteeism (social, political and cultural) and the removal of political activity into the realm of an opportunistic coping with problems having no context.

These hypotheses may seem unduly oversimplified (and indeed they are so, as presented in these terms), but they all point forcefully to a situation in which the academic compartmentalisation of disciplines, especially in sociology, has led our ideas away from what ought by rights to constitute their raw material: the media and society, the social bond, embracing collective representations and their physical expression in an organisation of social relations, activities involving participation/conflict, communication systems.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the media and, more broadly the status and form of production and distribution of knowledge should be central to the investigations of the authors to which I have referred. Since Plato, who defined his ideal city in terms of the largest number of people by whom a single orator could be heard - both medium and message - social control and participation have always stood at the heart of the problem of social communication. Tell me what you communicate, and how, and I shall tell you in what society you live.

Whether they sensed this or not (the "what" all too often taking precedence over the "how"), those who have initiated experiments in new forms of participation in the media have raised a problem, thus, reaching well beyond the experiments themselves. On further thought, our modest efforts to define

the concept of participation after our previous meeting in Liège may also have had a wider scope than we suspected at the time. Read through them again with the foregoing comments in mind: you will see that they raise very precisely the question of the social bond, the overall organisation of our societies and its evolution: they are the fortuitous spin-off Robert Merton's *"serendipity"* - of a search in which empirical data intended to confirm one hypothesis generate other, new hypotheses calling for an unexpected enlargement of the theoretical ground.

o

o o

Looked at from a distance of a few years, what for convenience's sake I shall call the "new media" will be seen to embrace not one but two social, political and institutional realities - two tendencies. According to one, the model remains close to that of the mass media which, for reasons I shall not reiterate here, are condemned to technical and administrative deconcentration or, at best, to a decentralisation of their managerial and production/distribution apparatus. To give but one example, this is the course recently chosen by France, after a handful of highly ephemeral experiments with alternatives. Local television was stillborn and has given way to thematic or regional radio. The audience remains a "mass" audience, defined without differentiation in terms of geographical situation, local or regional, or of "biological" criteria (young people, women, the old etc). The intentions of transmitters diverge but little from the three classical functions of the media: inform, educate, entertain - to the extent that one can say these objectives correspond to anything at all in reality (2). At best, the listener can take part in programming as an individual but administration, programme design and control remain in the hands of professionals, most often attached directly to national radio-television bodies. Pluralist advisory bodies

---

(2) Without wishing to anticipate, I would point out that in the past it was the combination of these three functions (information, culture and entertainment) that provided the founding myth of the media as the instrument of democratisation and was held to justify the coherence and singleness of their organisational development as means of mass communication, whilst today the questions of audience fragmentation and how to make the dissemination of informatic economic have raised the problem of their separation.

have been set up occasionally, but in most cases their structure corresponds, at the level of decentralisation, to that of the groups who have power and social control in the town or region.

In contrast to this type of decentralisation or specialisation of transmission, in which the initiative is usually taken by the public authorities and national broadcasting authorities, there are the experiments with other social uses of the media arising out of autonomous initiative, in which the barriers between public and producer tend to blur and, ideally, disappear altogether.

As with any other taxonomy applied to the complexity of the social fabric, this one is, of course, open to question, and examples of merging trends in opposition to this dichotomy may justifiably be adduced to disprove it. Heuristically, however, I think it is perfectly valid because it can be used to identify forms of participation which, starting in the media, have implications for the broader realms of social mediation, the organisation of social relationships in their symbolic as well as their concrete aspects.

The first of these trends is simply a rearrangement of the principles of self-regulation (or self-legitimation, depending upon the point of view) to which we have been habituated not only by the media but by the development of representative democracy as a whole. Sometimes, the decentralisation of mass communication systems like that of the traditional media, means no more than feedback (surveys, listeners' letters), as far as participation is concerned. More often, however, the transfer of production and transmission centres to the regional or local level has followed a more general trend in our societies to "denationalise" some forms of social control. Their "localisation" (in the sense mentioned above, ie, according to Lyotard, topological instead of geographical) corresponds to an historical period in which the social cards have been re-dealt in favour of new elites emerging from the wage-earning classes (see the now abundant literature on the new petite bourgeoisie) playing the game of participation in conflict situations or, to paraphrase Lyotard again, in a revocable momentary consensus determined by interests of sector and category. At the level of local politics or associations, as at that of the media, this means participation in the form of increasingly institutionalised interaction mechanisms between policy/administration and "user", and the institutionalisation is part of the managerial logic of the very concept of participation in conflict situations, the object being to negotiate the transformation of a moment of

conflict into a moment of consensus (3). In concrete terms, this form of participation/interaction may be seen, in regional or local media, in periodical (general assemblies or users) or permanent (eg the local advisory councils of BBC local stations) advisory bodies, on which a majority of seats are held by official groups, associations and elected local or regional authorities. Hence this form of participation relies essentially on the parliamentary model, on delegation. It is only indirectly connected with production, which in most cases remains the province of professionals. The public (individuals, informal groups, associations) is associated with programmes only within a pre-established pattern, although contact may take place over the national network (telephone, debates, or at best by means of a public access slot, for individuals or groups).

The second trend entails, in opposition to the first which is derived from the present logic of political development, a voluntarist commitment to policy and self-management. In regard to policy it is voluntarist because it raises the problem of the ultimate purpose of information in its traditional terms from the outset, almost, one might say, against the current. It is self-managing because it demands complete autonomy of management, control, programming, production, and distribution and brings together the roles - control, transmission, reception which the media have helped to drive ever further apart in our system of social communication; and their recombination represents a desire to regain control, such as has been seen in the past at other moments of discontinuity from the revolutions of modern times to the reappropriation of autonomy by the reader of the scriptures, coinciding with the weakening of the institution which was alone empowered to elucidate them and thus to perpetuate the social division between clergy and faithful, as Michel de Certeau has explained very well in writing about the Reformation .

I would like to stress this point once again. The two positions I have just placed in opposition might seem as absurdly exaggerated as the historic parallels preceding them;

---

(3) This process of the institutionalisation of "movements" arising in the middle classes first as voluntary associations and then as para-public organisations, eg family planning, consumer associations etc, has been clearly described, as regards its social rationale, in the work of P Bourdieu and A Meister in particular.

but my only object is to replace what has been our shared subject of interest in recent years within the framework of a wider question which our commitment to the moment may not have allowed us to perceive very clearly, with the result that, by metonymy (new media, new questions), we have taken the tag-end of an old debate for its first appearance, or its resurfacing for a new eruption at a time when, and because, another eruption was occurring, one that shifted the question of information and communication out of the socio-political field and into that of political economy and economic policy reconciled in a triumphant neo-functionalism, out of the field of ideology into the field of a pragmatism - and performance - obsessed positivism. Since the 19th century the problems of information and education have been at the very heart of political debate: the terms in which societies are now stating those problems have changed often in recent years, but the simultaneity I have described above, by which we cannot fail to be struck, is no accident in this historical process. Nor, moreover, is the encounter of education and mass communication media today the result of any inner technological logic, but rather of their common surrender to the influence of the economy, and of the change in the social status of knowledge and information. Again, it is no accident that, in the rearguard skirmishing, the question of community media is being debated so close to the question of "alternative" schools, both of them contending, in their Fourierist utopias, that it is possible to progress beyond social inequality in contradiction to inequality's flatly cynical pronouncement that "things being what they are ...".

o

o o

To conclude, I would say that at the beginning of a decade which for some of us, whether we like it or not, is going to mean a change of direction and terrain in our research or activities, the decade that has just ended will at least have enabled this issue, whose significance to the present I have tried to define, to survive, however marginally. The "community media" seem already to have been consigned to their "rightful" place, a few lines casually appended to voluminous reports on the culture industries, the latest affair of state. But when a matter becomes an affair of state, that does not necessarily imply that we must abandon investigations which, however often distorted by the blinkered views of micro-sociologies, are in that respect no worse than macro-economies.

In other words, and to avoid what I spoke of before as the obituary aspect of this stocktaking - which would seem even more justified, moreover, despite the heartening perseverance of a few countries, by the death notices of local radio and television which have been pouring in of late - I would say that although we may have the impression that on many occasions the question of community media was badly put, at least we know now that it was a good question. No man is a prophet in his own field.

P Beaud - January 1981

Bibliography

For a less telescopic review of the body of monographs on the concept of participation in the media which have been published by the Council of Europe, reference should be made to:

P Beaud - *"Community media?"* Proceedings of the Council of Europe symposium held at the invitation of the Belgian Government at Liège, 19-22 December 1978; Council of Europe, Cultural Policy Study Series No. 2, Strasbourg 1980.

P Beaud - *"Community media? Local radio and television and audio-visual animation experiments in Europe"*, op. cit.

In my attempt to bring the issue up to date I have drawn upon a number of authors, and the following of their works in particular:

Jean Baudrillard - *A l'ombre des majorités silencieuses ou la fin du social*, Paris 1978

Pierre Bourdieu - *La Distinction*, Paris 1979

Michel de Certeau - *L'Invention du quotidien - Arts de faire*, Paris 1980

Jean-François Lyotard - *La condition postmoderne*, Paris 1979

Albert Meister - *L'Inflation créatrice*, Paris 1975

Simon Nora and Alain Minc - *L'Informatisation de la société*, Paris 1978

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GREAT COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

by

Sean MacReamoinn
Head of External Affairs
Radio Telefis Eireann
(Ireland)

It is not my intention to attempt a catalogue of new technologies in the audio-visual media, of the organisational changes which have been happening in the major networks, or of the financial arrangements involved in these changes. To do so would be not only boring, but pretentious, and indeed impertinent in a gathering of this kind. What I shall attempt is to relate some of these developments to the present crisis in communications and to propose for your consideration, over these next couple of days, what options they may suggest for a way forward.

You may quite properly object that the future is not in my brief, that my job is to consider recent developments, and leave it at that. But if, as they say, a week is a long time in politics, I believe that in modern communications the future is now, and the recent past is ancient history. And, if there is one lesson to be learned form this history, it is that, over and over again we have failed to recognise the significance of changes as they occur, and continue to fight yesterday's battles while tomorrow's armies mass on the frontier... I do not, of course, mean that wisdom lies in jumping to the kind of conclusion that was fashionable in the nineteen-fifties when it was sagely prophesied that radio's day was nearly over except as "television for the blind" - or in the kind of panic reaction which the coming of radio itself produced in the twenties when the new medium was seen as the mortal enemy of the press. On the contrary, while we must not live in the past, we must continue to live *with* the past - recent and remote - in the present, for the future. The study of the future begins with history. So much for generalities.

In speaking of a "crisis in communications" while recognising it to be of global dimensions and extending over all the media, it is with the world of the audio-visual that I am at present concerned, and more specifically with the major European networks, because it is in these networks that the crisis, part cultural, part institutional, is centred and paradigmed. It is perhaps

ironic that the element of public service, which has been in varying ways and degrees common to the networks, and which seemed at one time to be their greatest guarantee of stability, lies at the heart of the crisis. For good or ill - for good *and* ill - the traditional broadcasting services have both moulded and mirrored our society, and this symbiotic relationship has ensured that the crisis-bearing factors in both society and the media have worked in close inter-action, be they economic, technological or socio-cultural. It is under these three heads that we must consider "recent developments".

A fourth might be suggested, adhering to the political factor. If I reject this, it is not because I underestimate the importance of politics. On the contrary, I regard it not as a factor, certainly not an area of "recent development", but as the continuing context in which all social communication must subsist. Whether we believe with a former prime minister of my own country, that broadcasting is "an arm of government", or hold that it should be at all times an instrument of criticism and even of opposition, the structures of political power are the very contours of the world in which the media must live as institutions. And to suggest that this institutional dimension can ever be wholly separated from other aspects of the media - artistic, scientific, or what have you - is dangerous sentimentality. This is not, of course, to say that the media cannot help to reform power structures, or even occasionally help to bring them tumbling down. But as often as they tumble, new structures take their place, and with these again the media must make their accommodations. Lasting political change for the better can only be achieved by alert and courageous response to socio-cultural developments - but I anticipate.

Three crisis factors

Before we consider either these developments or the technological factors which may serve to bring them about, we must first take a hard look at the *economic side* of the present crisis. It is not all that complex a story: while assuming somewhat different forms from country to country, the basic problem is a shortage of money, both for capital development and for the maintenance of adequately planned services. Now this shortage in great part reflects the general situation in all our countries: recession, inflation, the high cost of energy - the pattern is universally familiar. But the problem is aggravated by difficulties peculiar to the networks themselves, and to the way in which they have traditionally been funded.

As John Hawkins, the editor of Inter Media has written recently:

"Public service broadcasting organisations are financed in several ways: a household licence fee paid monthly or annually; a direct government grant given annually; and the sale of airtime. The sale of programmes and publications provides a small bonus for some organisations.

Most public service broadcasting organisations regard the neutrality of their source of revenue, or the major part of it, as a guarantee of their independence, and the key to the spirit of public service itself.

Yet this quintessence of public service is now the obstacle of expansion if not survival. Viewers and governments are increasingly reluctant to pay the going rate. The broadcasters find themselves trying to steer between the Scylla of too much dependence on advertising and the Charybdis of too much dependence on government (although the threshold of dependence is notoriously difficult to fix)..."

To me the key statement there is the simple bald remark that *"viewers and governments are increasingly reluctant to pay the going rate".* There are, I believe, at least three reasons for this reluctance, which is much stronger than the general reluctance to pay the going rate for such luxuries as alcohol, tobacco, and the like.

Firstly, the West has learned over the last fifty or sixty years to regard the entertainment provided by radio and television not as a luxury but as a necessary right. (Let me digress for a moment to show what I mean. Until November 1978 when RTE set up a second TV channel, a choice of viewing in the Irish Republic was available only in those areas where there was overspill from BBC and ITV. Those parts of the country without such choice were often described as the "deprived areas".) So, an end to cheap broadcasting came as just as unwelcome a shock as was the end of cheap food to another generation. And no government wants to rub an electorate's nose in an unpalatable truth.

The other reasons for "reluctance to pay" have to do with the emerging challenge - some would say "threat" - of alternatives to the services provided by traditional broadcasting, and with changes in the nature of the broadcasting audience and, perhaps, its view of itself. Which leads very conveniently to our two other categories of media development (or crisis factor) - the *technological and the socio-cultural.*

The provision of alternatives to radio and television as we have known them has not indeed been the main incentive inspiring technological research and development in the field of electronic communications, not until quite recently, have such been seen to emerge. The simple aim of technically better (and perhaps bigger) broadcasting seemed to provide sufficient justification for the spread of *cable* systems, and ever the clearly more exotic prospect of *satellite* could be regarded as offering a new lease of life to the ageing networks.

To quote the Chairman of the BBC, Mr George Howard:

"There are two very big advantages to satellite broadcasting. First, that the costs will be falling at the same time as those of terrestrial broadcasting are rising, and second that DSB has inherent ability to provide national coverage.

Indeed it is the form of distribution which comes closest to the ideal concept of broadcasting: that is to say, a transmitter of only 150 watts that is able to provide a television programme to any home in a moderate-sized country such as ours (the UK), provided that there's access to a simple receiving system ..."

Again the *Video Cassette Recorder* was first welcomed as a way of seeing television programmes missed on transmission: and even *Teletext* came as a bonus, a novel addition to conventional viewing.

But, reassuring as all this might at first sight appear, a challenge (if not a threat) to the established order does lie latent in the new technology. Direct satellite broadcasting has been described (perhaps over-enthusiastically) as "the re-invention of television", and as Christopher Griffin-Beale has said in a recent number of Broadcast magazine, if all that was implied was *"that satellites could provide a more efficient national way of relaying existing national services, it would hardly justify such a claim".*

But he goes on to say:

"What is exciting interest, and concern, is the satellite potention for relaying new services, financed either by subscription or advertising, to audiences that could extend beyond national boundaries in a quite significant way.

Whatever the intentions of international agreements, a satellite's footprint - the elliptical coverage area of its beam - cannot be limited to avoid spillover into neighbouring territories. Moreover, it would be technically and economically feasible for cable operators much further afield to capture the signals with larger dishes and feed them to the significant number of subscribers already wired up on the continent.

With the potential multi-national audience lying under these beams - and the technical potential to transmit several simultaneous soundtracks in different languages on a satellite TV channel - a satellite TV service might be tempted to reach beyond its own audience, buying up rights to major movies and international sporting events, and competing with existing national services. Enthusiasts are spurred by the limitations placed on TV advertising in most of Europe, if not the UK, and the amount of money they estimate that's waiting for a suitable outlet on TV.

That is the prospect which is exciting some investors, but it is primarily a financial proposition. The impetus has not come from programme-makers, which is hardly surprising. Apart from a few less-than-riveting notions of an EEC channel, the concept doesn't immediately suggest anything new in programming, given existing well-tried methods for the international sale and exchange of programmes and movies. Programme-makers would hardly sneeze at the financial returns that might be on offer, but what compromises would be necessary to serve a large multi-national market simultaneously?"

Well, that's one scenario for DSB development as seen from the UK. I suppose it's one that most of us, in the networks or outside, would find less than attractive. The best that could be said about it from the consumer's point of view is that it would offer an enlargement of choice (of a kind).

The enlargement of choice would seem to be the name of another game - the VCR game, as the video cassette ceases to be merely a gadget for catching the odd missed programme. It is, I suppose, still problematical whether the cassette or the videodisc will become the standard vehicle for individually bought pre-packaged material, but even if the cassette continues to be mostly used for "time-delay" purposes, it is evident that the viewer will become more and more independent of the network programme controller and his schedules.

It may mean that certain types of programme may become less and less common in these schedules - a process already under way in relation to schools' television, where the classroom cassette has obvious advantages. All this points in fact to an undermining of the idea of broadcasting proper - as cable has already put paid to "wireless". Even broadcasting's last ally, Teletext, may be superseded by Videotex, again striking a blow at the oracle in the network.

As each man becomes his own Programme Controller, each woman her own News Editor, we will be indeed seeing a profound change in the nature of the broadcasting audience. *"Fragmentation"* is the word that comes to mind, and once again we can see a reflection of what's happening in society as a whole. I am far from suggesting that radio, not to speak of television, was born into an age of organic social integration and cohesion. One could hardly so describe either the inter-war or post-Hitler-war years in Europe.

Nevertheless, despite the inherent instability of the twenties, three characteristics of European democracy of the time favoured the development of the kind of broadcasting service which radio originally provided. First of all, it was a democracy essentially representative to the point of hierarchy: direct participation (with certain exceptions in Switzerland and elsewhere) was not on. Secondly, while class structures and class consciousness were maintained in most countries, there was a kind of official homogeneity of national life and consciousness, often more fictional than factual, which transcended religious and cultural differences - while, in most countries, seeking to contain and cater for such differences. And thirdly, most people had very little money. In such a social context public service broadcasting was bound to flourish; it was cheap, it provided entertainment, it served the established arts, it maintained religious and political orthodoxies, and discouraged pluralism by keeping it within safe limits - one thinks of the BBC pre-war "regional programme(s)" and the Netherlands type of organisation based on politico-religious interest groups.

The system was sufficiently serviceable to survive the cataclysm of the second world war and, not only to form the basic structure for post-war radio in many countries, but to provide the framework for television. There were of course changes. National homogeneities were looking rather threadbare,

and more and more orthodoxies were being questioned, though still fairly politely in most places. Alternative programming which offered genuine cultural options was beginning to emerge, and if the BBC Third Programme had its imitators in other countries, the kind of fare which before the war was mainly provided by Radio Luxembourg was now becoming generally available. However, money was at first as scarce, and in some places scarcer, than before the war, and so alternatives outside the system were rare. Do-it-yourself electronic entertainment, for most people, meant the LP audio disc. And while television as it developed began to widen the areas of permitted discourse, it soon established its own parameters of safety and acceptability. Curiously enough, it was in radio that the first technological breakthrough of socio-cultural consequence occurred; I refer, of course, to the transistor explosion.

There is a whole generation of young adults now among us who cannot remember when there were no transistors, who heard Beatle songs at their mother's knee, and to whom television was part of the furniture. To this generation the *événements* of 1968 are probably not even history - just stale, forgotten politics - and many of the questions which agonised even those born just after the war are no longer relevant. Still, I believe that the sixties was the great watershed from which our new society has flowed, and that the roots of our present confusion are to be found in the developments which occurred at that time.

And we *are* confused. Not alone are the old certainties gone, but nobody pretends that they're not, and the media, as always mirror the social scene they have helped to form. But as to where we go from here, or how to get there, we seem to be at a loss. At times media policy sounds as if we were still living in the "golden age" of radio; at others, panic reaction to commercial competition, or straight piracy, leads to a Gadarene rush to the pig-sty. We talk knowledgeably, in the jargon of the *marketeers*, about the mass-audience, while at the same time institutionalising fragmentation in cultural ghettos - notably in the notorious "colourising" of radio channels. And, while we have belatedly abandoned Reithian infallibility as to knowing what the public does or should want, we seem unwilling or unable to discover what they need. In a word, we have lost our nerve.

I am speaking of directions, objectives, policies. I do not suggest that good and useful and, indeed, splendid things are not being still done in network radio and television, that imagination is dead, experiment stifled, social responsibility gone to sleep. No, but institutionally we have become spastic, and culturally we've lost our way. The two problems are connected, and we must tackle them in tandem if we are to find a way forward - or even out. All the wisdom of all our schools of management will not do the trick, necessary though appropriate management techniques may be. The division of large organisations into smaller units, or the amalgamation of autonomous groups, may or may not be useful - but none of this will cure our ills. A pragmatic approach to difficulties can deal with symptoms, but alone it cannot get rid of the basic sickness - let alone offer real hope for renewal. For these we need something much more fundamental: we need a philosophy.

Now, when I say philosophy, I don't mean a theoretical construct of *a priori* ideas and principles. As we say in Ireland, *Dia idir sinn agus an tiolc!* (God between us and all harm!) No, I mean a lively body of thinking, forward-looking though rooted in experience, and "reading the signs of the times" with a clear and dispassionate eye. And where are these "signs of the times" to be found if not in those very factors that have come to bring about the present crisis? Let us, instead of watching them with the glazed look of a mouse confronted by an army of cats, seize them as aids and allies in our forward approach.

And so, may I offer a necessarily personal and therefore partial view of how the traditional networks can contribute to the future of communications in Europe, and therefore to that European Community which is broader and deeper than any political structure.

The future is now

Let me begin this last section of my paper, then, with three points which I believe to be fundamental:

- the great community of Europe is made up of many small communities (just as the grande patrie includes many petites patries): only by serving the small can the great live in health.

- the relationships of community and communication is no more accident of words, it is vital: without good communications any community, great or small, must die.

- public service remains the best formula, indeed the only tolerable one, for a sane communications policy: and, with all their faults and distortions, the major networks have a crucial role of leadership to play in the working out of such a policy. But to do so they stand in urgent need of reform, not to say "conversion".

Returning to our three categories of crisis-factor - economic, technological and socio-cultural - I think we can now see that these very factors can be the three great steps forward for our networks, if only the opportunity is seized. And allow me to stick out my own neck on one point: I do think that it's time that those networks which derive much, or most, or even all of their funding from non-commercial sources should reconsider the "traditional" attitude of professional broadcasters to direct grant funding by the state.

I honestly believe that the time has come to recognise that the whole expensive ritual of licence buying and collecting is unnecessary. As a safeguard against government interference it has lost all meaning for many years: governments will interfere, as and when they wish, either by "civilised" legislation or by less subtle means. To pretend that the radio/television audience is not coterminous with the general taxpaying public hardly makes sense today, and the spectacle of the broadcasting directorate lobbying government each year for a sufficient increase in the licence fee (in order to keep up with inflation) makes a sour joke of independence. Surely it is not beyond the wit of men of goodwill to devise a system by which the monies available for broadcasting can come from the people's purse and be spent without political pressure. Many countries manage to do this for the arts, why not for radio and television?

This would, I believe, in time reduce dependence on advertising to a minimum where it would no longer be a crucial element in funding, and therefore an equally crucial influence on broadcasting. Anybody who has worked in a broadcasting service partly funded from advertising will know that direct interference by commercial interests is exceedingly rare: the danger lies more in the honest "accommodation" of producers and scheduling officers to commercial "good sense".

We have seen that the central financial problem for the networks has been "a reluctance to pay the going rate". By placing most of our eggs in the public basket i.e., the basket of direct state funding, we may take a risk, but I think that it's a small risk if we can devise suitable safeguards. And I am absolutely certain that only by placing financial control in the hands of the people as a whole (though ideally not in the state bureaucracy) can we come to terms with the new technologies.

If you recall the "scenario" for DSB development which I quoted earlier on, you will have noted that the more far-flung elements were envisioned as a financial proposition. If commercial television franchises were once described as "licences to print money", it is unfortunately true that the main impetus for over-the-horizon developments in satellite, cable and videocassette has been coming from commercial interests: and a special supplement in the house-organ of the Nippon Electric Company of Tokyo issued last December gives us an idea of what prospects for our future are gestating in the enterprising mind of Japanese technocracy. *C & C* is the name of this particular game, the full integration of computer and communications technologies which will, the editor says with due modesty, *"create a new world"*.

One can of course, throw cold water on much of this, pointing out for instance, that in Japan itself, in Tama New Town, a pilot total-information scheme with a high density of domestic distribution failed to achieve the expected popular response, as it came up against ordinary human inertia: your average citizen preferred the passive pleasure of watching his favourite TV show to becoming actively involved in the miraculous electronic future. And as to the total-control *à la 1984* which would seem to be the corollary of total information, one has read twenty explanations of why it can't happen. Similarly, even the commercial advantages of DSB on a global scale have been, we are told, wildly exaggerated... I must say that when I hear wise remarks of this kind, I often think of the wise men who told us that man would never, *could* never set foot on the moon... or that television while theoretically possible, was practically and economically out of the question... or that the Maginot Line could never be breached.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and if free societies are to survive and flourish, we must watch carefully (surveiller) every development that can have a bearing on our social and cultural life - not least in the field of communication. The technology of communication is too important to be left to the technologists and, to be fair, they don't want it left to them. But neither must it be left to the boys on the make, whether politically or economically.

I have spoken of fragmentation. In itself it is a bad and a very sad thing, leading to that isolation which is the ultimate human hell. But inasmuch as it represents a reaction against the idea and fact of the mass, against mass psychology, and indeed the *mass-media*, it can be a creative stage in man's pilgrimage. I find it hard to buy Alvin Toffler's idea of a Third Wave civilisation with its home-based economy in which "telecommuting" and tele-transportation are the lifelines of a new network of electronic cottage industry, and there are no longer producers and consumers, only "prosumers"! But I do believe the new technologies can help transform fragmentation into something new and positive: a society in which the beauty of the small communicates with, relates to, works with, its beautiful mirror image in a multifaceted network of communities. And that word "network" brings us back to our basic theme.

Remember what Berthold Brecht said, nearly fifty years ago:

"Radio must be transformed from a medium of distribution into one of communication. Radio could be the most tremendous means of communication imaginable in public life, a vast channelling system - or rather, this is what it could be if it could not only broadcast, but receive, not only get its audience to listen, but get it to speak, not isolate its members, but put them into contact with one another".

Brecht's prophetic vision could become a reality today or tomorrow, because now the technology which he could only dream of is there. And I believe with all my heart that if only we would turn to this objective, the networks, the ageing institutions of traditional broadcasting would find a new function and a new life in helping to build a great new community of communities.

I have some small hope that this is not just a romantic notion, a hope rooted precisely in those tentative experiments in community broadcasting which a project group of the Council for Cultural Co-operation here have been investigating for the Council of Europe. I have had the honour of representing the Republic of Ireland in this exercise, and I have been impressed by much of what I saw and heard. But most of all I was gladdened by the initiatives of Swedish Radio, whose commitment to the local radio project continues to be enlightened and substantial. I believe that is under such patronage, the patronage of the networks, that a new meaning can be given to the public service in the new decentralised world of the audio-visual. I am, incidentally, happy to say that my own organisation, the Irish Radio and Television network, has also shown its commitment to this approach, in experiments which have now become fully institutionalised, and in its proposals for the development of community radio.

May I end with a caveat. Let us never forget that our countries form only one small part of the human community, and that our obligations in relation to communication go far beyond our own frontiers. Let us also remember that we are among the most fortunate of peoples in our material resources: I have spoken of a shortage of money, but at our poorest we must always appear unbelievably wealthy to most of our fellow human beings. An American writer on communications, George P. Kennedy, has recently pointed out that "*by the end of the century the affluent and well-educated may be even better-informed than now, while the poorer or more passive information consumers may have lost some or all of what they now get ...*" In a word, he suggests, information could become a demarcation of the future for "haves" and "have-nots".

Let us see to it that that does not happen.

Working groups

INFORMATION

by

Holde Lhoest
Head of Department, RTBF Directorate
(Belgium)

From now on, we have to consider information from a dual point of view: as a function of communication, and as a global system of communication. One following from the other, they are marked by a fundamental phenomenon: the "computerisation" of media and messages (1).

Computerised communication

The concept of information has been greatly enlarged, by both new contents (services and knowledges in data form) and new methods of access (interaction between user and source).

Therefore, the line between collective communication and individual communication, between telecommunication and telebroadcasting is beginning to blur, and the two are beginning to form huge "integrated" structures.

Computer regulated, the new "systems of information" - which will, in fact, embrace much more than information - will be the sum of all the links between the production, storage, control, transport and reproduction of messages. They will represent the end product of the underlying trend which has been making inroads into the audio-visual realm in step with the economic crisis. The industry of electronic communication - especially that of information - is considered to be one of the rare sectors offering any significant potential for development. Technocratic logic and commercial logic have accordingly joined forces to establish the primacy of economic over cultural needs.

---

(1) *"Numerisation" or "Digitalisation".*

The result is that, in the long run, information systems may be deeply marked by two phenomena:

- Centralisation: Horizontal centralisation, through "transnational" and "transmedia" mergers (1); vertical centralisation, in each country, through state institutions (2) operating in association with the electronics industry.
- Commercialisation: commercialisation as a political concession to technico-economic determinisms, but also as an expression of states' inability to provide services of public interest themselves.

Information, which used to be considered a social value, will thus be taken over by the market rationale: as for contents, only the most profitable "veins" will be mined; and only the richest social categories will reap the benefits.

At the same time information will be exposed to fierce competition from what are now called "entertainment electronics". This industry, which is also following the pattern of the transnational mega-systems, will be the second main feature of the audio-visual world of tomorrow.

"... as important as nuclear energy"

Facing this prospect, an allusion to, the declaration of the European Ministers for Cultural Affairs, meeting in Oslo (1976) and Athens (1978) may not be misplaced.

Since the *"growth produced by industrial civilisation has not had as its concomitant a qualitative improvement in society"*, they said, *"social and economic policies (should be) oriented much more towards cultural objectives."* And they concluded that *"in view of the advances of communications technology which represent both an enormous potential and a serious risk"*, cultural development must in future entail *"public participation and decentralised decision-making adapted to the national, regional and local situation"*, with a view inter alia to mobilising the *"creative resources of those sectors of the population untouched by traditional cultural policy"*.

---

(1) IBM has been said to be "the paradigmatic firm of the end of the 20th century".

(2) Cf inter alia the new role of the postal and telecommunications ministries, as carrier and "editor" of information.

Will these declarations (1) remain empty sentiments? And what about the postulates they imply: access to means of expression, active communication, plurality and "transparence" of information...?

How are these expressions, which have since been written into many political programmes, going to hold up against the demands of a society in crisis, in which communication is primarily an economic sector and "culture" a pretext for the conquest of new markets?

Some think this is one of the main factors in the survival of that society.

"The debate on information technologies", as Ithiel de Sola Pool of MIT says, *"is as important as the debate on nuclear energy"* (more than vaguely reminiscent of Helmut Schmidt qualifying the new media as *"more dangerous to society than nuclear energy"*).

But is there such a debate in our countries? Is there even a readiness to embark upon a truly uninhibited process of reflexion?

Or will the debate have to be precipitated by militant groups, those Alain Touraine calls "the new social movements", such as the ecologists (2)? Groups extolling the virtues of "soft" technologies, which would come into society not as the creatures of the industrial imperative, but in response to an "ecology of communication".... Germany already has a "citizen's television" action group demanding that local communities have a say in the organisation of cable television pilot projects.

Two levels of participation

The concept of "participation" must be enlarged. It can no longer be confined to the - more or less autonomous - use of certain media by certain communities. It must also

---

(1) *Which have been elaborated upon in the MacBride report*

(2) *Unless it is precipitated by "pirates" simply moving in to create a fait accompli*

cover policy decisions about the media, and, not only those affecting their organisation, but also the decision relating to their desirability, in terms of the question: is it absolutely necessary to do everything that is technically feasible?

Unless there is participation in the overall policy, any other form of participation is no better than hot air disguised as democratisation of the media. Cut off from the whole, it would at best be a one-night stand leading to nothing: many European experiments have disappeared without trace, even though they have proved that a different form of communication was possible.

But, how are we to set in motion a process of collective thinking that would be more than a travesty of a democratic movement, and would not be taken over by established interests operating through a network of intersecting connections?

Several countries have audio-visual councils or planning committees which tend to be stiff-necked bodies disinclined to fraternise (1). The "public hearings" which are frequent in Northern America (cf CRTC and FCC) do not exist in Europe, where the rule, with very few exceptions is secrecy and the fait accompli, one exception being the "freedom of radio broadcasting" *(Volksbegehren Rundfunkfreiheit)* referendum in Bavaria, which ended in the rejection of commercial television.

"Democracy is the sum of all the minorities". How do we create places to meet, discuss and decide, in which they can be taken into account? That is a fundamental question for anyone who wants to give cultural development priority over technological development.

Structures of the media system as a whole

What this policy affects primarily are the structures of the communication systems, now reaching far beyond the national framework.

---

(1) *In France, the deliberations of the Haut Conseil de l'Audio-visuel are virtually secrets of state.*

1. In every country, because of the increase in the "transnational flow" of messages, these structures are determined by the international context. This flow might well come to jeopardise the cultural development of national systems. Commercial schemes for multi-national satellites could cause the "destructuration" of local media in some countries, for example.

Some countries have already been extensively "commercialised" by "transfrontier" broadcasting (Canada, Belgium) and their political authorities caught in a tangle of economic and financial cross-pressures are powerless to assert cultural values.

In Europe, it is true, commercial satellite schemes parade behind the banner of European integration, adopting the loftiest of motivation as a pretext for the conquest of the biggest markets; and whatever we may say to the contrary, that conquest will be carried out by entertainment *made in USA* and not by "intercultural" information...

Could the principle of the *"free flow of information"* be a mere screen to hide weaknesses in the cultural personalities of national communities? If so, every effort must be made to conclude transfrontier (if not Europe-wide) agreements to protect the objectives of individual countries.

2. But because of the virtual abolition of the broadcasting monopoly (or even oligopoly) held by existing systems, the problem of the gradual commercialisation of audio-visual media exists within each country as well. The public corporations are finding themselves in a singularly weakened position at the very moment when they must meet the challenge of the new techniques. The crisis has made them vulnerable in their dealings with the political authorities, who are responsible, among other things, for the decisions upon which their economic survival depends (licence increases, whether and how much publicity to allow).

The precariousness of their situation, now being felt by even the most powerful and distinguished of their number, may well make it impossible for the old broadcasting systems to share in the development of the new techniques, or use them, as it is their mission to do, on behalf of the public interest.

In principle, it is their duty to give every user the best possible technical service at the lowest cost and in the best conditions of access. To this end, the public bodies must offset the segregationist tendency of the new systems which offer expensive services to the most wealthy social groups (this is now happening in the USA). Faced by the commercial exploitation of mass success for profit, they must take into account all the social minorities which will be left behind by the market economy, in particular by supplying more information and giving more service.

But, paralysed by their ponderous structures and buffeted by conflicting pressures, most of the public broadcasting authorities seem ill-equipped for the fight. One of the first objects of a media policy should be to restore their independence and vitality by allowing them to adapt to the new situations: the place they hold is a reflection of a society's values and has a decisive effect upon the whole system of communication.

3. The third aspect of this system is the decentralised or "grass-roots" media - local, community, alternative, "free"...

There are two conflicting ideas about them. One is that they will provide the best antidote to the transnational standardisation of audio-visual media. The other, which might be called the Trojan Horse hypothesis, is that the free media foster commercial interests and political partisanship (this has been confirmed in the case of Italy and, to some extent, in Belgium as well) a great deal depends no doubt, on countries' political skill in defining rules and seeing that they are respected; but this ability is weakened by the growing intricacy of governing coalitions.

At first, most of the grass-roots media define themselves by opposition to the traditional ones, rejecting their organisation, methods and aims. Many could, however, be the allies of the public broadcasting authorities because they share the same commitment to the public interest.

Does this mean they should conform to existing institutional models? If they did, they would be very likely to reproduce the traditional power structures at every level. There should in any event be "bridges" between "old" and "new" media, in the framework of co-operation between the different sectors of cultural action.

Grass-roots media and information

The grass-roots media are a product of information: often, of a desire for "counter-information" but in any event information other than that purveyed by the traditional media - more varied, closer to reality, more "transparent".

1. But, the computerisation of the information function represents a new challenge. Ostensibly decentralising and "convivial", what the telematics networks will be primarily decentralising, and standardising are services and knowledge. In this respect they will be achieving exactly the opposite of a different form of information.

How can these networks be humanised? By involving potential users in the building of data banks; by leaving enough space for the non-traditional information providers who can keep the networks supplied with educational data and information relating to social services; (1) and by increasing the number of networks and entry points in the interests of true decentralisation.

The object is to offset the cultural and social segregation which telematics might otherwise accentuate and strengthen and to ensure equality in sources of information by ensuring full representation of information intended for minority groups.

In this context, the problem of the organisational principle of the *"common carrier"* arises. Already in operation in some countries, at the level of the telecommunications ministries' interactive videotext, the *common carrier* is supposedly neutral but in fact institutionalises the survival of the fittest by accepting any information provided as long as he has a healthy bank account.

The grass-roots media and action groups will therefore have a role to play in connection with participation in telematics systems. In the absence of an appropriate infrastructure, they should make sure that they have a place in the new systems being set up in transmitter, cable or telephone networks.

---

(1) *In the first German interactive videotext network there are almost 150 pages on an "alternative university".*

2. On cable, the grass-roots media will be competing with other new services for which cultural development will hardly be the prime concern. In "pay"-television in the United States the cable networks are already filled largely with entertainment, plays, shows, sport. To be sure, there is some information, but it is expensive and caters for the wealthiest viewers.

In general, the new satellite and cable services divide the North American viewers into two groups:

- those who can afford them: surveys have shown that *pay-TV* subscribers come from the upper middle class;
- those who have to be content with the standardised output of the large commercial networks.

The hopes raised by cable, through public access and community television, have now been dashed: on the contrary, by creating a discriminatory system of communication cable is actually intensifying social inequalities.

Is this the way things will go in Europe too?

In the United Kingdom, community cable experiments have been shut down for commercial reasons, despite the fact that they clearly demonstrated the need for active communication at the local level. Today, people no longer take much interest in this need, however, because cable has been opened up to more lucrative activities: a dozen experiments in *pay-TV* are to be conducted on it.

3. There is a real risk, as regards cable, that community information and expression will be stifled by a mass of commercial entertainment; and the risk is no less real in regard to video.

It is already apparent that cassette and disc production and distribution will be dominated by mercantile interests for which the most undemanding products will take priority (1).

---

(1) Actual video empires are being built all over the world by means of transnational agreements between the giants of the film industry.

Today nine out of ten cassettes contain feature films. Original productions are rare, especially in information: their cost is prohibitive for most potential users.

Here too, in this new sector of the communication industry, the law of the jungle being instituted by the market economy must not be allowed to reign alone; there must be encouragement for original productions, the expression of minority voices, and balanced access to technical instruments and their products.

H. LHOEST

EDUCATION

by

Margareta Ingelstam
Producer
Sveriges Utbildningsradion A.B,
(SWEDEN)

"It's all very well for you in the industrialised countries to use your media for entertainment and information, but in a developing country they have more important things to do."

It was approximately in these terms that Andrew Moemeca from Nigeria opened his speech to a UN seminar in Stockholm some years ago on the right to communication. He continued: *"The principal function of the media in my country is to educate, with a view to raising people's aspirations, generating among them the willingness to improve their conditions, motivating them to action.... Unless we know, understand and are convinced of the need to act, we cannot progress either physically or mentally. And unless the individual progresses, the nation cannot do so either."*

This is the attitude of Andrew Moemeka from Nigeria, towards his countrymen's and his country's need to grow and develop.

I come from Sweden, a so-called industrialised country. For many years the Swedish model has been hailed as an example. Journalists from near and far have come to study the exciting developments taking place in Sweden. But this has all changed. At the last election a correspondent for one of the big U.S. newspapers wired his head office: *"Suggest cover the Swedish election"*. But the reply came through: *"Don't go. Sweden now considered normal country"*.

We all have room for development

But don't Swedish people and the Swedish nation need to develop? If they do, can they then manage without audio-visual media in the effort of development? Can Sweden as an

industrialised nation rest content with children and adults whose chief means of entertainment is television? And are educational broadcasts to be a species of "interior decoration", an innocuous hobby which makes no impression on realities? Isn't it time we stopped dividing up the nations of the world into industrial nations, which are considered fully evolved, and countries in need of development?

If we can agree that all our countries are classifiable as countries in need of development, then we should stand up for education as being the most important function of social communication and it is in this light that the role of the media must be understood. Once we have done this we can no longer submit to the technological imperative, whereby all new media techniques have to be used simply because they have been invented - in the research laboratories of the transnational media corporations. The media policy - or rather, non-policy - being followed by most countries puts technology in the forefront, and various committees of inquiry and advisory bodies have been given the task of inventing and dreaming up social needs which technology will be able to cater for. These bogus needs then furnish an alibi for the appearance of the technology concerned, forming the thin end of a commercial wedge. Educational measures are barely discernible. At best they can attract 1.7 per cent of the population - a thin stratum of the best-educated and most ambitious members of the middle class. Such is the state of American public television today.

Control or be controlled?

Presumably we are all unanimous and sure of ourselves as regards the right to control technology and the necessity of doing so. On the other hand debate in the past few years has shown that we are unsure of ourselves where the methods, principles and objectives of such control are concerned.

Thus we will have to reverse some of the questions proposed by the steering group. For example, instead of "What is the impact of the new technologies on education?" we will have to consider "What is the impact of education on the new technologies?" or "Which media are best able to serve education and development?"

Educational policy, as well as cultural policy, focuses on people and emanates from the idea of people as active and creative. The human individual has a fundamental need to strengthen his identity and develop in and through his relations with other people, and when these needs are provided for, he also needs to understand and influence the communication and education around him, for example. In doing so he becomes a resource in the service of society and the common good. This view of man and his needs should not only provide the starting-point for determining the content and methods of education or of the messages transmitted and received via the media: it should be applied still more to the structures, the system, the communications network - in a word, to technology.

Every choice of technology is bound to be a composite one, but we will nonetheless come a little closer to a common strategy if we can agree that, all other things being equal:

- direct human communication is preferable to "technified" communication;
- two-way communication is better than one-way communication;
- reception and processing on a group basis should be favoured in preference to individual consumption;
- the aim should be to minimise the technical and administrative intermediaries involved in production;
- non-commercial systems which can be run by popular movements or citizen's groups are preferable to commercial systems.

Basic needs

I will not attempt to draw all the practical conclusions which should be incorporated into a strategy, but these principles confirm the recommentations made by the UN Commission on a new international communications order, under the chairmanship of the Nobel Peace Laureate Sean MacBride. The Commission writes as follows: *"All nations have to make choices in investment priorities. In choosing between possible alternatives and often conflicting interests, developing countries in particular must give priority to satisfying their people's essential needs. Communication is*

not only a system of public information, but also an integral part of education and development". A few lines further on in the same passage, we read: *"The educational and informational use of communication should be given equal priority with entertainment."*

In reference to "basic needs" the Commission was thinking of local radio, low-cost small format television and video systems, technologies relevant to community efforts, technology for viewing groups, decentralised media production centres, etc.

Thus, "basic needs" do not imply all these new modern inconveniences such as satellites, TV discs, teledata for domestic use and so on, so for the time being, these can be left in the wings.

"A chimera" I hear you murmur. (Besides, who needs satellites and TV discs when we have telepathy?) But since 1980 a number of organisations in Sweden have been campaigning, sometimes on a joint basis, to secure eg a moratorium on the TV disc, and they also say No to the Nordic satellite.

1994

Now I will invite you to look at a scenario timed thirteen years from now.

For some years the Council of Europe has been paying teams of researchers and other experts to travel round studying local communication experiments in various countries. They have written exciting memoranda on the things they have seen, but as the Queen said to Alice, *"It is a poor sort of memory that only works backwards".*

I would now suggest that we reconnect our memories so that they will also work forwards, and that we transfer ourselves in time and space to Demotopia, a medium-sized developing city in a medium-sized developing country reminiscent of Sweden. The year is 1994.

Like other municipalities, Demotopia ran into problems in the early eighties, only worse. Factories and other businesses in the city began to decline, and more and more

workers were made redundant. Doom and gloom prevailed. When one of the firms was on the verge of going bankrupt and closing down, people sensed disaster around the corner. They also began to sense that the problem was not confined to their factory or their city, nor even to their country: it was much bigger than that. Could it be that a country's economic wellbeing was no longer guaranteed by the conventional money economy and mixed economy models?

Wasn't it H.G. Wells who wrote: *"Human history is increasingly becoming a race between education and catastrophe"*? Sean MacBride paraphrased this in his introduction to the UN Commission report. *"Human history is increasingly becoming a race between communication and catastrophe"*. These wise men were doubtless thinking in planetary terms when they penned their mots, but there is every reason to believe that the same thing holds good at local level.

The employees took the only logical course. They started study circles, not only on the subject of alternative production for the factory - like the Lucas workers in Britain - but also in search of an alternative future for Demotopia.

Another natural expedient was to request assistance with these educational and communicative activities from Comedia, the Educational Radio and TV Company which came to play a strategic and dynamic role resembling that of the National Film Board in Canada during the 1970s in various projects connected with *Challenge for Change*. But in the present instance, attention was concentrated on the combination of education and communication and intensified efforts within a municipality. Close co-operation with Comedia had a number of effects on the work of the study circles and on youth education.

A media library

It started with the conversion of the central public library into a media library, containing among other things several hundred video cassettes. Most of the programmes came from Comedia, but there were also programmes which had been bought from the National Broadcasting Company and other corporations, foreign ones included. The media library is also part of an experimental scheme of activities involving a Nordic video network, an interchange of Nordic programmes widely used for teaching purposes, pre-school education included.

In this way, for example, pre-school children learn Nordic songs and games. And they use video-letters to communicate over the borders. There was not enough money for more than one video system, and it was not difficult, for example, to choose between the new compact cassette and the TV disc for educational purposes, because the cassette made it possible for new programmes, recorded straight from the air, to be added to the programme bank all the time. Some programmes - eg those for minorities or other minor target groups, or programmes intended for use on cassettes only, are transmitted at night. Some cassettes may have been used for a thousand ifferent programmes, while others have retained the same content all the time.

One difference between a videogram and printed material is that the videogram is an excellent group medium. Videograms now became readily available, so that both teachers and pupils could use programmes when they needed them: it was as easy as taking a book off the shelf. Teachers who had been highly critical of the use of television in teaching, and who had found it bothersome having to order programmes well in advance and at a considerable distance, began now - under the pupils' influence - to realise what an asset it could be. The library also has a systematic data catalogue of all material, so retrieval presents no problems. Nearly all the programmes carry straightforward instructions for use, together with suggestions regarding reading and group work. Others are accompanied by soundtape recordings or other, more expensive printed material. There are also several ingenious and exciting games involving various forms of simulation. When peace education was incorporated into the curriculum in 1980, no teaching materials were available, and one of the most frequently used games here shows the connections between interpersonal and international violence. It also contains amusing exercises in conflict resolution.

A cable network links the main media library with local branches, schools, pre-school institutions, hospitals, pensioners' homes, residential adult education centres, immigrant club premises and so on. Distribution to individual households has been deliberately avoided, so as not to contribute to further isolation, privatisation and passivisation. During the last decades loneliness has been one of the country's most serious problems, and this is what makes personal communication and social contact in connection with programmes so important.

Partially refound and reconquered

"Impartiality" is a point of honour with radio and television corporations and for school teachers. Commitment and enthusiasm - which are among the most important of human endowments - were considered out of bounds. Teachers were not to adopt standpoints and radio and television programmes were to set out pros and cons, rounded off and full-stopped. But the programmes now produced directly for cassettes and group work are partial, provocative, unfinished: they use question marks, exclamation points and dashes instead of full stops. The group can then take over and continue the process. The programme forces the participants to argue for and against, to consider their attitudes and feelings together with other people, to adapt standpoints, to take sides and to become involved. These programmes provide opportunities for a type of emotional training which is a form of education often ignored by schools in the past. But it is vitally important as a means of strengthening identity and self esteem. As Rollo May once put it: *"It is through his choices and commitments that man becomes human. He finds value and dignity through the many decisions which he makes day after day."*

Programme more!

It is mainly for pedagogical reasons, then, that videograms are being more and more commonly used in teaching. But at the same time it would be foolish to conceal the fact that economic considerations have also been involved. Education requires an especially heavy investment in staff, and is therefore badly hit by inflation and hard times. Both national and local authorities are starting to prune their budgets, but the need for education is as great as ever - perhaps greater than ever in periods of crisis.

There was a great deal of resistance to programmed teaching at first, and there still is. Among other things, reference was made to the poor results of the period of educational technology in the sixties and seventies. It was then that somebody said: *"There are those who believe that people can be replaced by machines. They are the ones who should be replaced by machines."*

But the people responsible for the overall planning and financing of education realised the inevitability of banking on more "capital-intensive educational production". Instead of submitting indiscriminately to pressures from industry, however, they also began discussing principles, for example, whether the technological approach should perhaps be confined to areas which involved the learning and reiteration of skills and facts entailing exact concepts and answers.

In the United States it is often taken for granted that programmed teaching packages are to be used by individual pupils. But just as in China small children's trousers are made with buttons at the back to help the children learn to co-operate. Most teaching material here is produced with a view to pupils working together. In this way the less able pupils can be helped by others. This training for group work is at least as important as the actual acquisition of knowledge, and many people see in it the reason for the decline of the competitive mentality.

The teacher's role transformed

When teachers observed how well videograms worked as catalysts for various kinds of group work, they went ahead with a clear conscience to devote more time to pupils with special needs and to planning their teaching. The main class, in which pupils sit waiting to answer every thirtieth question, only needed to assemble every now and again. Otherwise, it was divided up into small project groups. But this in turn demanded a greater measure of social cohesion, and in many schools the old class-teacher function is growing more important even at senior levels. The old teacher role, which was mainly concerned with the transmission of knowledge, has been increasingly transformed. Today the teacher is more of an organiser, perhaps more of a facilitator and an "encourager".

Learning by acting

But what I started to talk about - and the most exciting of all the things that are going on - is the education and projects now in progress to create an alternative municipality for the future. This education is proceeding at all levels - in both adult and youth education. *"The principal function of the media is to educate, with a view to raising the people's aspirations, generating among them the willingness to improve their conditions, motivating them to action."* Another educational philosopher called it *"learning by doing"*, and a third called it *"learning by experience"*.

Yes, it is in this tradition that consistent efforts are being made here to use the media-video, local radio, printed matter and, in the past few years, local television as well.

More and more people - both children and adults - are making programmes as part of local media activities. Pensioners and immigrants are particularly active. Women have started a video guerilla with the anti-Orwellian motto: *"Little Sister is watching you"*. Local television is also used for work on examples from outside-utopias as well as dystopias, examples from industrialised and developing countries, examples from other civilisations, asking "What can we learn from this? What can we do about this?"

It is not a case of the bigwigs and experts telling the people what to do. On the contrary. Popular common sense walks a few steps ahead of theory. The leaders are the followers.

The local media are also consistently used to induce people to get together at meetings and in action groups. Messages need to be reinforced through personal communication in order for things to start happening. This is the point at which people are no longer content just to react but feel a common urge to act.

The local media operate as educational media in the best sense of the term. Instead of concentrating on trouble and drama in an effort to scoop their competition, they prefer to investigate causes and connections. They bring out the good news as well as the bad, hope and determination as well as discontent and resignation. Education and communication are instruments of liberation. And dropouts plug in.

In recent years a number of experiments have taken shape, focussing on self-reliance, co-operative production and distribution, consumer power and appropriate technology - focussing on human growth rather than economic growth. Town and country are gradually being de-transnationalised - and re-humanised.

In one school, for example, a fish farm and a printing works have been started. The media workshop and the precinct video theatre are run by a co-operative. The youth

organisations jointly operate a media café - representing all media - with the ultimate aim of de-commercialising the quasi monopoly of the Presam distribution chain. Consider how much education will be needed - in mathematics, economics, technology and civics - before all this can be achieved!

But do not imagine that all this took place without a number of severe conflicts. Several of the projects may seem idyllic now, but the road to them - challenging technocracy, bureaucracy, market mechanisms and ingrained conservatism - has not been exactly a tourist circuit. But I join Thomas Jefferson in saying : *"Some rebellion now and then is a good thing and as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical".*

Finance

The establishment of these local resources for the production, storage and distribution of audio-visual media was by no means a foregone conclusion. It all took money, both from the local and from the national budget. This would probably never have happened if it had not been for the new environmental movement for the cultural environment which came into being in the early eighties and insisted that Council of Europe resolutions and UNESCO recommendations concerning the cultural aims of development be taken seriously. It became increasingly proficient in the use of the international bodies as levers of media policy - which is surely what they were intended to be, were they not?

Popular movements and civic groups and other organisations pooled their resources in media workshops. They demanded funds from local authorities for premises and certain activities and funds from the government for technology. Since the Nordic satellite project had been shelved, they demanded that public money be spent on local communication techniques instead. This change of focus - indeed, about-turn - in media policy took time, but in the end there came a policy resolution on national government procurement of production technology for media workshops, for a video network with the libraries as its principle resource, and for a new radio network for local broadcasting.

Nearly all this technology could be manufactured in Sweden, and for the first time in modern history, cultural policy, educational policy and industrial policy entered into a synergetic relationship, mutually reinforcing each other.

The reason why money was also forthcoming for experimentation with local television was the encouraging results of the local television experiment in Kiruna during the 1970s, where it was found that viewers rejected American series like *"The Onedin Line"* in favour of local programmes about community issues. Suppose local television could become the civil defence that is needed to out-smart the cultural invasion by the foreign satellites - David against Goliath.

What happened to Comedia?

All this happened on the local level. But what happened centrally, for example to Comedia, the Educational Radio and TV Company? In the beginning of the eighties Comedia went through a crisis. It was a question of identity - of its role and responsibilities in the new media world. Politicians began to ask questions but got evasive answers about the use of the programmes so they began voting budget cuts. But the links between Comedia and those concerned with local education and communication in Demotopia had a number of effects on the continued planning of education during the eighties, in terms of both content and methods. This Comedia was rescued.

Comedia became more open to the outside world and began to regard itself more as an education and communication agency rather than a radio and television company. It also began to see itself as an agent of change. In this way the human network began to equal the media network in importance. Producers began to lay stress on processes triggered off by programmes rather than the content of the programmes themselves, and they realised that the essential thing was for people to be present in their own world, not in the world of mass media.

But people devote more than half their leisure time to radio and television. So what can be more important to an agency whose responsibility stands squarely at the point of intersection between culture, communication and education, than to devote the bulk of its resources to enabling people to make a more aware use of radio and television?

Hence the prime objective for Comedia has been to work as the *ombudsman* for freedom of speech both at national and at local level. Its obligations include the following:

- To give people opportunities to learn how to become more conscious and critical as media consumers.
- To give people opportunities to learn how to become more conscious and more critical non-consumers.
- To advise people - teachers, pupils, organisations, groups - on the use of *ready-made* films, TV programmes etc in education as well as in cultural and political work.
- To give people opportunities to learn how to express themselves in different ways (speeches, discussions, drama etc).
- To advise people, including schoolchildren, concerning the use of different kinds of media equipment and the production of works for cassette recording or for transmission on local radio and television.
- To supply people with the resources (educational material, technical equipment and personnel) enabling them to use the media according to their needs.
- To offer education and practice for future "barefoot" producers, animators, facilitators.
- To give active support to the decentralisation of radio and television and make them more open and democratic.
- To give people opportunities to learn about the dramatic expansion taking place in the field of communication and find means of overcoming the material, social and political obstacles to progress.

Before we return to the present day and its realities, I should make it clear that the utopia I have depicted is not intended to be much more than an indication of direction. It is a provisional utopia.

But I make no apology for its almost complete lack of resemblance to the media land into which the not entirely invisible hand of the market mechanisms is shepherding us.

The scenario which I have outlined - briefly and fragmentarily - has also been conceived in relation to children: our decisions for the future should hinge on their needs and the implications for their living conditions. The child is the measure of the man.

Epiloque

The theme of this colloquium is *Communication and Participation - Freedoms and Constraints of the Audio-Visual.* I am profoundly convinced that the most serious constraint affecting the audio-visual media is that they can so easily become a poor substitute for direct personal communication.

Personal communication is a uniquely human privilege, and at the same time a fundamental human need. When we come to thank life for its blessings, it will be for this purely human faculty of communication.

A good friend, who is now dead, once wrote to me as follows: *"I believe that man, the individual, does not possess any intrinsic value but derives value from others. That which is valuable is not within us but between us. If we were to realise this and live accordingly, our endeavour and that of the whole of society would be to care for each other's value."*

ENTERTAINMENT

"SHOVE HA'PENNY VERSUS SPACE INVADERS - ENTERTAINMENT - AS THE PROLONGATION OF WORK"

by

Peter M Lewis
Lecturer, University of London
(United Kingdom)

Twenty-five years ago it was possible to go to a "pub" in Britain, drink a local beer and talk over a game of "shove ha'penny" (played with coins on a polished wooden board). Now the drink is mass-produced, the decor matches the TV advertisements and flashing lights and electronic *bleeps* proclaim the presence of "Space Invaders", a popular video game. Conversation is dead.

This development is paralleled by what has happened in the electronic mass media. Programmes are pre-packaged to meet the requirements of overseas markets and their launching in the domestic schedules is preceded by promotional hype and synchronised with advertising, merchandising and other media support (paperbacks, magazine series etc).

The (well-documented) conglomeration of ownership in the mass media ensures the smooth functioning of this entertainment machine whose workings correspond to the increasing regulation and depersonalisation in the sphere of work.

Research commissioned by the British IBA shows that the "needs" of TV viewers are mainly for entertainment. At any rate TV is "used" by viewers as entertainment whatever the overt labelling of the genre. For example, ITN's *"News at Ten"* appears regularly in the Top 20 most popular programmes, educational programmes strive to emulate the pace (and budget) of *Sesame Street*, sport is corrupted by the demands of TV and so on: the genres coalesce into one mass of entertainment whose ideological function is social control and the encouragement of habits of consumption.

In radio, the omnipresence of "strip-programming", a North American commercial radio format, fills the schedules with pop music, limits speech to two-minute segments and has driven "programmes" into "minority" listening slots.

It is this reality which influences the form of alternative or community media and must dictate the conditions of their struggle for survival. The invasion of leisure time and habits by the entertainment industry allows it to demonstrate "needs" as being fulfilled and a "lack of demand" for alternatives of the kind Project 6 has documented. In Adorno's words *"the result is the circle of manipulation and retroactive need in which the unity of the system grows ever stronger"*.

To attempt to separate out community media into education, information and entertainment is to accept categories defined for paternalistic or commercial reasons by the controllers of mass media.

Especially at local level, culture is, or used to be, indivisible. What matters, as Paul Beaud points out (1) in his review of Council of Europe studies, is not the scale of transmission, the style of presentation or even the content of programmes but who owns and controls the media and how effectively a self-managing form of organisation can survive economically while genuinely reflecting the culture of its constituency/community.

After this bare outline of entertainment considered from the point of view of community media I want now to unpack some of the points in order to provoke ideas and to suggest a framework for our discussion to-day. First, I think it will be helpful if we spend a moment or two on definitions. Community Media. Paul Beaud, in his Council of Europe study (p. 174 et seq) has somewhat despairingly evaded a definition, concentrating on degrees of participation - feedback, inter-action and self-management - and emphasising that ownership and control is the over-riding determinant. On reflection, I think this emphasis, which I have myself adopted in the past, neglects consideration of texts and audiences. Work done in this area in relation to mass media is certainly relevant to a discussion of entertainment, and could be helpful also to students and proponents of community media. I shall return to this in a moment. (Clearly we are going to be

---

(1) Paul Beaud, Community Media, op. cit. p. 179

concerned in our discussions of the themes (1) with both mass media and small-scale or community media. A critique of mass media goes hand in hand with the search for alternative channels, practices and types of organisation.)

Information, education, entertainment, culture. Although our draft programme states it as our intention to challenge these categories they have been used to divide us into our working groups. I think we shall find it hard to separate culture and entertainment, and, as I remarked in my outline, British audience research shows that, whatever the category, television is mostly perceived and used as entertainment by the audience (2).

We should consider, too, the other end of the business, that of the producers. The production and packaging of mass media is carried on as an entertainment business. Even where, for example, a state broadcasting organisation is run as a public service, the increasing internationalisation of the market, and in some cases direct competition, is forcing on public service broadcasters the adoption of commercial attitudes and strategies. We shall be examining the impact on culture of the multinationals of the consciousness industry (3), an industry which in other parts of its activities is implicated with and underwrites the nuclear arms race.

Behind the actual operations of industry and government, we may want to ask what is the role of leisure and entertainment in a capitalist society. In this apparently "free" time, labour is refreshed and recreated, and in the process consumption takes place, realising surplus value (4). The second part of my outline's title recalls Adorno's gloomy analysis -

> *"Amusement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work. It is sought after as an escape from the mechanised work process, and to recruit strength in order to be able to cope with it again. But at the same time*

---

(1) *"Cultural decentralisation, the impact of new technologies and the innovative use of old questions of finance and structure".*

(2) *Needs and Satisfactions of the TV Audience, IBA 1980*

(3) *A Mattelart Multinational Corporations and the Control of Culture, Harvester, 1979*

(4) *For a discussion of the ideology of leisure in relation to rock and punk music see S Frith Music for Pleasure, Screen Education No. 34, Spring, 1980*

mechanisation has such power over a man's leisure and happiness, and so profoundly determines the manufacture of amusement goods, that his experiences are inevitably after-images of the work process itself." (1)

We should want nowadays to qualify that view. What about women's work, for instance? And what, in the present economic crisis, if there is no work? Or if the boundaries between work and leisure are changing, as they are? The role of entertainment in these circumstances takes on increased ideological significance (2). One need not be dubbed unduly cynical if one remarks on the timing of events such as Royal Weddings, the introduction in Britain of breakfast television and the fourth TV channel, and the prevelance, as Stuart Hood has pointed out (3), of nostalgic historical drama in the TV schedules to comfort an insecure middle-class.

Still sketching out definitons, I should explain that I use shove ha'penny, a traditional board game still occasionally found in old-fashioned British public houses (bars) as a symbol for popular culture. This is ground much worked over in a British tradition of writers from Hoggart to the Marxist historians Raymond Williams and E P Thompson. I am using popular culture in the anthropological sense of the "lived experience" of a group and in opposition to, on the one hand, "high culture" which is defined in terms of formal or aesthetic criteria (a cruder definition in Britain might be those cultural institutions in receipt of the bulk of the state's arts subsidy); and on the other hand, in opposition to mass culture with its connotations of mass production and manipulation.

So shove ha'penny in its Englishness can be equated with the Frenchness of Barthes's steak and chips. This kind of culture can be "read" like a text whose meanings are encoded

---

(1) *T Adorno and M Horkheimer The Culture Industry - Enlightenment as Mass Deception in Curran et al Mass Communication & Society, Open University, 1977.*

(2) *See, eg D Hobson Housewives and the Mass Media, in Culture, Media, Language, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1980*

(3) *Stuart Hood on Television, Pluto Press, 1980, p. 27*

in symbolic form. The semiological interpretations of Barthes and others have been taken up by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, notably by Stuart Hall. It is interesting, incidentally, that though an early discussion by Hall on the encoding and decoding of the TV message was presented at a Council of Europe meeting in 1973 (1), this line of analysis has not been followed up in Project 6 studies.

I think the work of Hall and of others such as Morley (2) and Hebdige (3) are important as enabling us to qualify and correct Adorno's pessimism. Adorno describes how

> *"certain reproduction processes are necessary that inevitably require identical needs in innumerable places to be satisfied with identical goods...it is claimed that standards were based in the first place on consumers' needs, and for that reason were accepted with so little resistance. The result is the circle of manipulation and retroactive need in which the unity of the system grows ever stronger".* (4)

Morley's work on the reception by different groups of the BBC news magazine programme *"Nationwide"* shows how the messages encoded by certain production practices and structures contain more than one potential "reading". There may be an intended or "preferred" reading, but different groups will read the other meanings also embedded in the text according to the extent to which they share or reject the assumptions and framework of the programme-makers.

Hebdige has analysed the changes in style and music fashion undergone in youth cultures. He shows how there is a constant tension between the improvisations and interpretations adopted by subcultural styles, like punk, for example, - bricolage is the term he uses, borrowing from Lévi-Strauss - and the incorporation of these initiatives by the music industry, the fashion world, the mass media.

---

(1) A more recent version has appeared in Culture, Media, Language, 1980

(2) D Morley, The Nationwide Audience, BFI Monograph, 1980

(3) D Hebdige, Subculture: the Meaning of Style, Methuen, 1979

(4) Adorno & Horkheimer op. cit.

We may be entitled to suspect, then, a degree of resistance, creativity and cynicism (the qualities are not incompatible) among people exposed to mass media. We are still left, however, with the problem of how community media can be justified in the face of systems which can show that "retroactive needs" in Adorno's phrase are being satisfied. Who wants, who needs community media? It may not be sufficiently compelling to say to governments that it is through community media that resistance to mass media can be expressed - not, that is, so long as we oppose community and national media. It is when we look beyond national frontiers to the threat of a depersonalised multinational invasion - literally, the space invaders if we think of direct broadcast satellites - that we may find the justification for small-scale networks.

Mattelart and Piemme have recently warned against the naivety of assuming that social transformation can come from some saving new mode of communication (1) . They plead for a serious redefinition of pluralism and public service which, they imply, will try to link old and new media, and different levels of network.

Of course national broadcasting organsiations are right to be concerned about competition across frontiers and from outer space. But this obsession can lead to harmful neglect of inner space (just like a relationship that is destroyed by jealousy) - while the corruption of public service broadcasting continues.

If we agree then that governments are facing the wrong way, or rather should be persuaded to face both ways, we should consider here the strategies that follow as a consequence. And here the experience of our Belgian hosts with free radio should be particularly helpful.

Does one incorporate the free radio sector, or will this destroy its vigour? Does one authorise the extension of the public service to local levels (as in Sweden and the UK)? Does one legalise a separate sector (Sweden again, being

---

(1) *New means of communication - new questions for the Left* in *Media, Culture and Society* Vol 2, No. 4, October, 1980

campaigned for in the UK, and existing already in the USA, Canada and Australia) or would this be to invent a game more elaborate and time-consuming even than Space Invaders which distracts attention from the main issue - how can a democratic public service attend to local cultural needs?

CULTURE

Proposals for a consideration of its future

by

Monique Sauvage
Chargée de recherches
Institut National de l'Audio-visuel
(France)

Among the functions traditionally assigned to the mass media, "culture" must be the most highly suspected, questioned and contested.

In a majority of European democracies it was plain, at the end of the second world war, that radio and television, as part of the machinery of the state, must play their part in the reconstruction and restoration of society. Very soon, however, the claims of the media ("a window on the world", "a prodigious instrument of culture"), were countered by the intellectual class with the idea of television as a "mind-numbing machine" definitely not suitable for learned culture.

Subsequently - that is, once television had become at least a legitimate object of sociological analysis - a series of studies (I am thinking of those on popularisation carried out by the Roqueplo team of the French Ministry of Culture in the early 1970s, or the INA study conducted around the same time by J Périllat, on "cultural learning") indicated that television, the so-called instrument of "culture for all", was actually widening the cultural gap between individuals and social groups.

Looking beyond this questioning of the effectiveness of television as a means of imparting culture, a more basic question could be clearly discerned, concerning the very idea of culture: was it an accumulation of knowledge, a learning of behaviour or attitudes, a store-house of representations and concepts?

Similarly, the qualification "cultural" as applied to a category of television programmes is also open to question: in the enquiries on cultural learning the viewers tend to qualify some television games or variety shows as "cultural programmes" whereas the television stations themselves make

very careful distinctions between the function of different categories of programmes (for confirmation, one need only consult the television companies' annual reports).

These few remarks on "culture" will certainly not make our task any easier, but it is probable that we shall have to explore them in greater depth before we can even begin to talk about the three themes we are to discuss.

In regard to cultural decentralisation, this type of exploration should lead us to two questions:

In the first place, does it mean local production, or does it mean setting up local liaisons on which a sort of local cultural integration system can be built? One of the findings of the "cultural learning" study was that the potential effectiveness of the learning process can be increased if it is followed by exchanges, gives rise to discussion, becomes part of social activity as a whole. But one of the main arguments of the promoters of media decentralisation was that the local cultural environment should enliven local media at least as much as be sustained by them.

Have local and regional bodies tended more in one direction than the other? Have experiments in local media and local communication, whether using old or new technologies, given more weight to one or the other of these?

We have seen that the local and community media have interpreted this "cultural mission" very differently, depending on the case: local production quotas, broadcasts by professionals on one or another aspect of local culture, self-managed time-slots, broadcasts of particular products designed for particular cultural, religious or ethnic groups etc. We have also seen that the reaction of these media to the cultural imperative, as it might be expressed in a master plan or simply in the original statement of intensions of the local or community experiment, could change with the passing months and years in response to the degree of professionalism of the media, the development of local attachments, or the relations maintained with the rest of the country's communications system.

Secondly: is it possible, on the basis of the still very young experiments in cultural decentralisation, to envisage some form of specialisation in cultural activities, a "division of labour" between local and national networks? A division between "scholarly" and "popular" culture, between "learned" culture and practical knowledge?

Consideration of the impact of the new technologies raises the same type of question. To borrow the hypothesis of D Wolton and J C Missika in "Les futurs de la télévision", how plausible is "fragmented television", in which every type of cultural content would have its specific audience and a specific instrument to reach it (ordinary television, pay television, videodiscs, videotex, etc)? And even more, how would this specialisation be organised? In terms of content or in terms of the production form or type of "audio-visual writing"? Are the same products likely to turn up being broadcast over different instruments, or is each instrument more likely to engender a specific type of creation? Will the videotape recorder, as we see it in European countries - where it has been too short a time, perhaps, to judge - be used according to a principle of accumulation or of selection? Can we infer from the satellite projects that this will become a medium for programme exchanges, or will it rather become a lowest common denominator for programmes whose cost is justified by broadcasting them to a huge audience?

For example, the present plans of the CLT as regards the type of products to be broadcast by the satellite launched in 1985 envisage an allocation of tasks which might well become the model for audio-visual production in the coming years: production companies set up for the purpose by the CLT and film or television production companies - we have just learned of one such new venture - would be asked to prepare "European cultural" broadcasts for distribution in several languages, while information would continue to be handled by national news editors who would divide up these programmes among themselves - again, we have just learned of the existence of such agreements between the CLT and German editors. Information, the last bastion defending national cultures against a form of production designed to be assimilated by the European Everyman: is this an oversimplified wail of Cassandra or is it plausible and perfectly realistic? After all, a similar division of labour has already occurred between the local media, which provides service, information and studio broadcasts, inexpensive and, it may be, authentically local and communitarian, and the national media which, with a larger audience, can afford to produce more costly and elaborate broadcasts which may have greater cultural effectiveness.

There is one final group of questions, not the least important in the production of cultural programmes, which structures and forms of financing will predominate?

Does the end of the monopoly over television production in Europe presage a split between public and private producers, large and small firms, or a realignment between film and television industries, and the equipment and programme industries? And above all, what strategies will programme producers adopt? If there is specialisation among the producers of different types of programmes (games, variety shows, fiction, etc), what will be the links between specialist producers and specialised modes of distribution?

The diversification and multiplication of communicating machines is bound to mean a multiplication of the products, images and information communicated. Perhaps it will come at the end of a standardisation and industrialisation of the products to be distributed, or perhaps it will follow a diversification of production modes - that is, a different form of relationship between the communication professionals and those who have something to communicate. The accumulated thoughts of the past few years in the framework of the Council for Cultural Co-operation should help us to make some progress in this debate.

GENERAL REPORT

by

Henry Ingberg
Adviser to Project No 6 "Culture and Media"
Head of the Private Office of the Minister
responsible for Audio-visual Media
Ministry of the French-Language Community
(Belgium)

This report has been prepared for the Council of Europe in connection with the cultural programme of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. The opinions it contains are the author's and do not necessarily reflect either the views or policies of the Council of Europe or its member States.

This general report has been compiled from a number of sources, some converging and others conflicting. But from all these individual components some dominant ideas emerge and that is undoubtedly important as well as unexpected, because the variety of the questions considered and the complexity and diversity of opinions might easily have led us into a jungle in which it would have been impossible to disentangle the main trunks from the side-issues clinging to them.

At some points, clearcut and occasionally extreme positions were adopted. One thing was irrefutably self-evident: the well-known divisions of the functions of radio and television (information, education, entertainment, culture) which had been taken for granted as a basic dogma, could no longer be accepted. The traditional classification did not correspond to recent developments in the electronic media. On the contrary, interpenetration and contrast are the order of the day now, and their effects require analysis. If reference was made to the former divisions, it was only to produce a reaction or revision.

The new technologies

Two attitudes emerged from the discussion. For some people the "new technologies" were a problem requiring examination and analysis, but in regard to which it was possible to make choices. For others, the advent of the new technologies was in the order of a natural, ineluctable

phenomenon, and as the phenomenon itself was not open to question, analysis could be relevant only to the use we would make of it.

My personal opinion is that nothing is ineluctable and that it is perfectly possible, if such is the political desire, to arrest or programme the arrival of the new technologies in relation to social and cultural priorities. The production of video-cassettes offers a striking example. For years we looked on as the video-cassette producers beat against a wall, unable to cross the threshold of economic viability. For five years we watched them going bankrupt, one after the other. And after five years the tide turned, the wall was breached and substantial profits began flowing in. This was no accident: commercial programming is a reality and must be taken into account.

The launching of the videodisc on the market today is not the automatic, unthinking product of technical evolution; it is a programmed fact, resulting in particular from market fragmentation, the emergence of new openings and new financial resources.

These things are worth remembering, because if private enterprise is capable of this kind of programming why should not the authorities, in the widest sense of the term, be able to programme the use of the new networks as well?

This is a real challenge and question for us. The success of private enterprise in its programming operations, even after a certain amount of failure, proves that nothing is ineluctable and nothing happens entirely by chance.

Let us therefore stop hiding behind the protective screen of "natural phenomena" and try to formulate some clear, specific options which can also programme the future.

In a word, let us define an "overall media policy".

Media mergers and centralisation

This centralisation is both transnational and trans-media. Transnational concentration has taught us that the media have taken us far beyond national frontiers; what began with cable

will end in the satellite, obliging communication industries, both state-controlled and private, to think in terms of an international field of action which some may prefer to call a market. As for trans-media concentration, there have been many examples of it of late. We see different media combining television working with the written press, the electronics industry involving itself in both written press and radio and television companies. Matra, for example, after building up a large electronics and aeronautics industry, has bought Hachette, taken over the management of Europe 1 and invested in film production.

Audience fragmentation

This colloquy, it seems to me, marks the demise of the conception of the audience as an undistinguished, shapeless, amoebic mass. We have now moved on, in theory if not in fact, to the idea of a fragmented or diversified audience.

We shall now be dealing with groups, minorities, distinct communities which, taken together, may at times form what used to be called "the majority", but this new majority has a "variable geometry" depending upon geographical criteria, social stratification, cultural or educational qualities.

Obviously, this phenomenon must be related to transnational and trans-media centralisation, this creating the two poles between which the new communications networks will grow.

"Profit" and "non-profit"

It is very much of a simplification, of course, to set the two terms against each other in this way, but it does reflect certain realities which cropped up over and over in our discussion.

Communication, and audio-visual communication in particular, could move, economically, in two directions: either towards the quickest possible profit or towards a cultural return corresponding to various cultural options and objectives. The dichotomy is undoubtedly oversimplified, but it nevertheless reflects a very real rift, and trying to pretend that in the end both terms of it are doing the same work is no longer an adequate response. I think the great majority of those attending the colloquy have firmly rejected this all-one-at-bottom approach.

I want to make myself very clear here; we have not said that profit is evil and non-profit a good, nor have we said the opposite. We have simply borne in mind this dichotomy, this tension, when clearly reaffirming the principle of the priority of public service. However imprecise the concept may be, it indicates the choices to be preferred and the foundations of the radio and television of the future, as they are already outlined in the all-too-unclear present.

Participation in the media

Participation was the very crux of this colloquy. Here again it is plain that what we are concerned with is social and political, in the broader sense. The concept of participation was constantly present in our analysis of the media's functions.

The social and cultural aspects of the media are now such that purely authoritarian choices are no longer possible. The first act of participation, beyond any doubt, is to enable everybody to take part in defining the media policy; this means that the defining must be done through an all-inclusive political debate conducted in the presence of parliaments. It also means going further than that, to the individual citizen. And for that purpose the citizen must be informed and made aware so that he can act and react to events. The task is enormous. It is hard enough to decentralise decision-making within the framework of our established political structures.

Yet this debate must take place. It must be open and deal not only with instruments, that is, with structures and institutions, but with the desirability of one or another choice as well. This brings us back to one of my first considerations, namely that there is nothing ineluctable, and everything relative, about the new technologies.

As for citizen information, this must now be organised. The ready-made notion that matters are far too complicated to be understood by the commonalty is not good enough. It is our duty - and by us I mean not just the authorities but the professionals and intellectuals, as responsible persons, whatever the level of their action - to move in this direction if we mean to adhere to the principle of cultural democracy that was so central to discussion in the Council of Europe a few years back.

The other level of participation in the media is that of direct involvement, conceived not as an end in itself but as a means of influencing the definition of a cultural and social project.

It has become a habit with us to blame some of our inadequacies and our inability to explain things on the crisis. But in this matter I believe we are faced with the necessity to redefine our social and cultural aspirations and our manner of social organisation, whether or not we have a crisis to use as an alibi. Citizen participation in the communication media is a major means of enabling the people to take part physically and effectively in the debate on the organisation of society. At this level again, we have seen inertia, avoidance, inadequacy, serving the hoary principle that things usually come right in the end. Today, in this crisis now, we are forced to make choices, because it has become impossible to back every horse in the field at once.

And that again raises the question, which criteria shall we adopt?

To return to the experiments in media participation, which were the subject of the Liège symposium in 1978, opinions in regard to them undeniably differed in the various groups. Some participants said, *"We carried out experiments; they have ceased. We therefore conclude that they were unsuccessful"*. To which others replied by reversing the terms and saying that if the experiments were not successful it was because they were not continued.

What do I mean by this? To judge of the success or failure of an experiment one must consider the size of the investment. In Belgium, for instance, we have continued the effort in local and community televisions and are investing in independent local radio. And I observe that they are successful, not only because the experiments are still going on but even more because they have found an audience. But if the present Minister responsible for Audio-visual Media in Belgium were to withdraw the financial support given to those experiments - something, by the way, which he has no intention of doing - we should then observe that the community television programmes had come to a halt. Is that any reason to conclude that failure was somehow built into the experiments? We have to be able to show continuity and consistency in our policies.

To return to the private markets and the example of the video-cassette, for five years, as I said before, the firms producing recorded video-cassettes operated at a loss and were in danger of going under. For five years they seemed to be acting in defiance of common sense, but they were simply following their programme, and as a result one day they were through the door, and the field began to show a profit. What happened during those five years? What was the reason for this perseverance, which an outsider might easily have called sheer stupidity?

The question I am asking is this: are the authorities capable of a similar perseverance or are we so eager to reap the fruits of our policies that we cannot wait more than six months or a year to decide whether an experiment has succeeded or failed?

I think the question is the right one, and it should now be directed towards those who are responsible for giving an answer, but this time laying stress on the possible choices involved in that perseverance. In other words, we are back to a total, programmed policy for the audio-visual media.

Satellites and "locals"

The communication system we live in has two extremities, which are connected in a way with what I have just been saying. First there is that satellite, about which we are all indulging in a little fantasy-making: the internationalisation of communication.

The other, which has made some headway in the face of considerable adversity, is local, and it is at this level that we ordinarily consider the problems of participation. We have been meeting the two from colloquy to colloquy for years now.

But at this colloquy a third term emerged, somewhere between the two extremities, and that is the national level. Why is this important?

At the Council of Europe Symposium on Community Media in Liège, we all witnessed the opposition of representatives of broadcasting institutes to some of the representatives of local enterprise.

Today we are witnessing a convergence, a similarity of objectives between independent local efforts and the activities of national broadcasting institutes. There are now areas in which the two are complementary and can be associated.

I see this as something entirely new. One might enquire into the reasons for the phenomenon, but in all likelihood it has been the transnational events (eg the satellite) which have acted upon us like an electric shock and made us aware that we must stick together, that solidarity was vital to the preservation of our cultural identity. Which does not mean that the satellite is to be anathematised; the transnational aspect of the new technology can be in enrichment, mainly in the comparison of different cultures. Everything will depend upon the way in which the new technique is exploited, and also upon the forces each member state can mobilise in order to become a full partner in the technique and not just a receiver of a few international transmission centres.

The new relationships between traditional broadcasting companies and local experiments wishing to offer a public service should be debated and discussed by those concerned. These new bonds must satisfy and not frustrate; and they should also be defined in legal terms. In this last connection it should be observed that when the different legislative hypotheses for the regulation of experiments in local communication and participation were being adopted the tendency was to define them by negative criteria - experiments could not do this or must avoid that; but they should be defined in relation to positive elements as well. Legislation should be able to state the underlying objective of the activity at local level. Once again, we must ask ourselves whether our discretion in this field is not just another instance of the indefiniteness of our thoughts, and this sends us back to the definition of an audio-visual policy.

Public service

I now turn to another central issue in the debate, ie the discussion of the concept of public service or service to the public.

We began by trying to define a public service: a service intended for the public, that is, operating not on behalf of the distributors or of the shareholders of a commercial firm

or of a state or of a political party. Its business is to address itself to the totality of the citizens and to meet all expectations, whether formulated by the composite majority of the general public or by minorities. In this connection I refer to my comments on audience fragmentation.

We then considered the operation of this service. On this point there was general agreement. We said that when referring to the service all we wanted to do was make it clear, in relation to our objective, that whatever the difficulties that might arise there was no question of abandoning that objective; on the contrary, we had to acquire an effective instrument that could help us to go forward.

Then we discussed the communication professionals employed by the public service and in this connection spoke of the relations between broadcasting the professionals in national bodies and the amateurs in the local and community experiments.

Many people, in particular those working locally, who were anxious to preserve their originality, their individuality and their own form of expression, began by defining their work in contrast to that of the professional, whom they considered too remote from the community and population and the actual problems of society. This opposition between professionals and amateurs arose even at the Liège Symposium.

In the course of the present colloquy we saw that the situation had changed and bridges were beginning to be built, connections were being sought between professionals and amateurs. The former are committed full-time to expression, individually or in groups. The latter enable the professionals to look at their own work, and incite them to become mediators between themselves and their surroundings, while the professionals, if they believe that encouraging the expression of the amateurs is part of their work, should be prepared to offer assistance when the amateurs are running out of steam.

The new exchanges between amateurs and professionals have by no means become a reality, but the principle has been clearly stated and this is worth our notice.

So much for the general conclusions emerging from our discussions; they were not produced by any particular group but cropped up from time to time in all of them, forming a sort of backdrop; this is why I have mentioned them before going on to the reports of the individual working groups.

The "information" group

This group based its discussion on the idea that nowadays the concept of information must be understood in at least two ways:

- first there was information in the narrow sense, that is, the information which is present everywhere, including in entertainment programmes;
- then there is information in the broader sense, as a system, as in the processing of messages.

The most important questions arising in this connection are those of information production and sources. We ask, who is informing whom? What are the logics involved? The questions themselves are not new, of course, but today's answers to them must be new.

Telematics and data banks raise questions which send us back to the need to make choices, to select, adopt priorities. The profession of informing should also be examined, its impact and the direction it is taking in response to changes in the organisation of information.

A moment ago I spoke of communication professionals, amateurs and mediators. Now a new person is joining the communication professions - the data-processor, whose role is assuming increasing importance with the development eg of data banks. He, too, is becoming a communication professional, in a sense.

Another problem is that of survey-based programme design. This technique for ascertaining what the public likes and expects has its advantages, but it must not be the only form of relationship with an audience which is no more than the raw material for statistics which can always be manipulated to some degree. Consideration must be given to forms of genuine access for people outside the broadcasting structures. The information dispensed must not be only that which is deemed to satisfy the presumed tastes of the public.

This is another area in which choices must be made and must be made democratically, with public participation.

The "Education" group

This group discussed at length the introductory report presented by the discussion leader. There was overall agreement as regards the general principles of the paper; not that there was no criticism or counter-proposals, but the main direction outlined in the text were approved.

Stress was laid on interpersonal communication as remaining the most basic form, and the group accordingly called our attention to this point and asked us to bear it in mind whenever we discuss communication networks and participation.

Many exchanges highlighted the links between education, broadcasting bodies and the various attempts to establish participation, chiefly at local level.

The question of education was the question of a society one might qualify as educative. In the past education has been taken for granted, in schools, and has been based on an equalitarian principle with, of course, all the attendant qualifications imposed by socio-cultural handicaps.

This erstwhile sacrosanct principle is open to question today. Education is no longer dispensed in the same conditions; activities which used to be regarded as essential are beginning to be pruned. Quality is being sacrificed. Elsewhere, however, private and commercial education are gaining ground.

The problem here is whether the authorities, by allowing the new technologies to move in indiscriminately and unprogrammed, even in the field of education, are not creating fresh inequalities and differences of level. But perhaps, on the other hand, the new media could facilitate a more intensive kind of education, one that could be a factor of social equalisation, the eternal but never achieved goal.

Those are the two possible terms and for the moment we are clinging to them without having really weighed the pros and cons or made any real choices. Once again, we are referred back to the overall media policy.

We now come to the question of programmes. First, there are those one might call traditional, the programmes of national radio and television networks. Then there are the less traditional ones, possibly closer to everyday reality, which are produced on the outskirts of the traditional public or private circuits. The main problem arising in connection with them is that of distribution. We have messages but because of the inadequacies of the distribution system nobody is receiving them. Nevertheless, it is essential to develop both these more realistic programmes, often of local origin, and the alternative educational programmes.

Imagination is needed to make educational programmes less dreary viewing. In this connection a very specific effort must be made to resist the easy solutions afforded, say, by animated cartoons. Animation distribution networks should work more closely together, too; teachers and teams of animateurs should join forces with the distribution network, whether air or cable. This refers to the education of children and young people; as regards adults - and here we are thinking of the principles of cultural democracy as developed in the past few years - the object is to expand *permanent education* so that the public can exert some influence on decision-making procedures and understand the type of mechanisms at work in the environment.

Once again, we confront the concept of the active participation of the public in programme production and the choices to be made in preparing an overall audio-visual *policy*.

We spoke of mediators, professional and otherwise, on more than one occasion. We also spoke of the increasing place occupied by data- or information-processors in the new technologies. Now, in conjunction with education, we must speak of educators, instructors and teachers and professors. A great deal has already been written about school and the audio-visual media. There is disharmony in this area, however, as we have been forced to observe, because the educators are absolutely not prepared to act as mediators or partners in educational programmes. Here, very definitely, steps must be taken quickly to redress the situation. It is not enough to add a course on the use of the media in teaching to college of education curricula. Teaching methods themselves must be re-examined, in relation to and with the help of the media.

The question of training teachers in the audio-visual techniques brings us back to the state and its role in this matter. And again, we find a lack, a failure to confront problems in their totality. At what level are bridges being built between media policy and education policy? New electronic material is being developed continually. Is there any real point in working this way? Is it truly productive? Or are we incapable of inventing new ways of teaching and learning appropriate to the new tools at our disposal?

It will be for dynamism and creativity to reply.

The "Entertainment" group

This group also investigated the relations between professionals and public. Even in entertainment, it was said, public participation is important and can itself become absorbingly entertaining, because it is an actual experience of people, of the community. To this end, a relationship should be set up between entertainment professionals and the audiences, leading to a form of entertainment which would reflect what we are or what our dreams are. Just as a carnival can show what a town is like, so a serial can say what we want to be. The entertainment field again raises the question of the predominance of the commercial rationale, for the cultural enterprise is under far greater pressure from the laws of the market there than anywhere else. In regard to the free radio stations, for example, it now appears that the free-expression stations, those set up for the communication of a "message", are being forced out of existence by stations operating on commercial principles. Confronted by the ubiquitous laws of commerce, how can the "public service(s)" resist?

It is no longer possible to answer this question by organising broadcasting companies along the lines indicated by the principles of public service. There must be another discussion, of the imagination and conception of programmes and the cultural models they reflect.

The "culture" group

This was certainly not the easiest field of exploration, presumably because "culture" is an ambiguous term and also, perhaps, because it is somewhat ethnocentric.

What is the difference between entertainment and culture? In this connection various examples were mentioned, to the general effect that entertainment seemed to mean whatever was light and diverting whereas culture implied a ponderous burden of deadly boredom. In many countries radio and television channels are programmed accordingly; there is one "popular" channel and another, "cultural" one. Sometimes the division between culture and entertainment occurs even in local, participation programmes.

The group then discussed the problems arising when attempts were made to distribute local programmes over national networks. How can local products having broad significance and relevance be broadcast over a national network? A whole series of psychological, occupational and technical obstacles make this a daunting enterprise. To this question, we believe there is but one plausible reply: the status and role of the technician, the mediator, must be changed, transformed.

Lastly, the group tackled the definition of "a living culture". It has often been said that the media have helped to destroy some cultures, particularly those bound up with everyday community life. But any culture transcends the purely picturesque level of folklore; it is a contribution to the search for the authenticity, the personality of groups and people; and its destruction is therefore a matter of no small consequence. It was for this reason that the "culture" group protested unanimously against the danger of cultural standardisation inherent in the transnationality of the new media. One thinks of the satellites, of course. To avoid these dangers the group recommended the search for cultural roots and a return to authenticity of experience.

The group then considered the problem of the strategies which did or did not exist in society in regard to macro-television. As we know, television transmits two cultural models, *an atomised culture and a segmented culture*. Television is assuredly a vehicle of culture for all, but it can also add to the isolation and separation of people and contribute to an abdication of responsibility. The fact that broadcasts are intended for particular portions of the public means that their contents can be more closely defined and account taken of differences and particularities.

New types of behaviour have appeared in response to these models. There has been talk of the misuse or abuse of television, and one thinks of a few experiences of video-artists. But one also thinks of other experiments, eg the video-libraries, which are not subject to the constraints of television and can become new places for meeting and communication between people.

Inevitably, this group was also led to consider structures and finance, and the transnational element reared its head again; some of those present seemed to favour the institution of a system of public protection entailing both legal provisions and tax regulations. It was said that the resistance to the industrialisation of production and the authoritarian behaviour of the new distribution networks must now be organised.

o

o o

In the matter of the financial support for community media, some participants suggested central funding schemes of the public subsidy type, while others thought more of taxes or local levies. Mention was also made of the possibility of setting up national community media funds which could be financed inter alia by a tax on unrecorded sound and video-cassettes; some people thought such taxes might be paid directly to the authors and creators of culture.

The impact of the new technologies is actually increasing cultural deformation and the dangers of cultural regression. The culture-gap between social classes, in terms of capacity of access to use, is being widened. Some people spoke of an opposition between narrative and digital learning. This cultural gap was intensified by financial obstacles which were increasing the dangers of elitism. Confronted by this invasion, it was important to devise strategies to meet it. The community is an excellent terrain for the contest, provided that it is perceived in terms of all the relations of cohesiveness and complementarity linking it to other media and to the society inhabiting it.

All these wishes expressed and ideas shared might look like the pious hopes of people meeting and exchanging ideas for the umpteenth time. I believe, at any rate, that all of us were conscious during these three days of the urgency of the need for some response to the reality taking shape around us. I also believe that we must not in any sense abandon ship. What we said had at least the value of forcing the debate to take place.

Once again, this investigation was organised in the framework of the Council of Europe - no coincidence, because the transnational aspect of the media was a central issue in discussion and because in the Council of Europe we are trying to see how, with the help of our respective characteristics and individualities, we can derive some enrichment from this international phenomenon and not allow it to become a factor of standardisation or impoverishment. I think that the people attending this colloquy are an illustration of this effort. Not all of us have the same ideas, not all of us have had the same experiences. But we are all faced with the same type of problem and have adopted the same type of objective. A draft resolution has been prepared by a "culture and media" group which has been active for several years. This group tried to bring together the fruits of their efforts in a text to be presented at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs to be held in Luxembourg in May.

Their draft might be appended to this report. It was not formally adopted by us, and that was not the business of this colloquy, but everyone attending it thought that the main points of the text ought to be taken into consideration by the political authorities.

It is an appeal to the politicians, to the professional radio and television workers who were present, to the directors of bodies, and also to all those who are carrying out experiments, often in most unfavourable conditions. Above all it is a request that an international issue should not be reduced to the simple sharing out of channels on a satellite or setting rates for the use of channels, but should be a full and complete cultural debate having as its outcome the subservience of technological investment to political and cultural objectives, and not the other way around.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

DRAFT RESOLUTION

"Cultural development and eletronic media"

prepared by Project Group No. 6 "Culture and Media"

Having regard to the work done in the Council of Europe both by the Council for Cultural Co-operation and the Committee of Experts on the Mass Media;

Noting the findings of the UNESCO report on communication and society today and tomorrow;

Considering that the many experiments conducted over the last ten years in the electronic communication field have ceased to be exceptional and presage fundamental cultural upheavals;

Convinced that technological innovation in causing radical changes in the economic and institutional structures of the electronic media, thereby leading to new communication patterns;

Regretting that the emergent electronic communication structures tend to owe more to a spirit of competition than to a clearly formulated cultural aim;

Noting that electronic communication, as well as having a cultural aspect, is of political and economic significance;

Considering that the right to communicate is a decisive factor in individual and collective cultural development in Europe;

Considering that, nationally and internationally, oversight of electronic communication networks may result in over-centralisation of state or commercial production of electronic messages;

Emphasising that intensive use of electronic communication networks mainly dictated by a desire for economic or commercial profit may well cause standardisation into preset patterns, to the near total exclusion of originality and cultural specificity;

Considering that technological innovation should make it possible to cater for the respective interests of each country's component localities, regions and socio-cultural groups, while contributing to preserve peoples and regions from undue introversion, thereby promoting communication and exchange between them;

Anxious to use the new electronic communication networks for balanced exchange between all concerned of images and sounds reflecting the personalities of the European nations and of Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world;

Considering that the means of fostering free and imaginative artistic creativity are vitally important at a time when use of the electronic media presents a risk of creative dissipation and standardisation;

Considering that broadcasting and television institutions must be designed to serve the public interest, an essential concern of all electronic communication policy;

Recalling that the desire to involve the public in the operation of the electronic media necessarily means bringing the production and transmission centres closer to their audiences, account being taken of the geographical proximity and unifying interests of given socio-cultural groups;

Aware that although the growing importance of the electronic media places special responsibility towards the public on professionals in the communications field, they can exercise this educational and operational responsibility only if their right to initiative and freedom of expression is protected;

Considering that the setting-up of new electronic communication networks, whether over the air, by cable or by the circulation of cassettes and records, requires that the authorities fund new investment by recourse to the licence fee, commercial management methods, advertising revenue or part of the profits made by the electronics industries, while preserving the aims of service to the public and cultural democracy;

THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

Calls on every member state of the Council of Europe to formulate a coherent general policy on electronic audio-visual communication;

These policies should be designed to enable specific, economic, technical and political decisions relating to electronic communication to meet cultural objectives that have been widely and democratically discussed;

They would also overcome obstacles due to administrative, legal, institutional or technical compartmentalisation by harmonising activities in the various sectors concerned with electronic audio-visual communication;

Requests:

- that to human rights be added a right to communication implying the possibility for every citizen and socio-cultural group to have access to and participate in the electronic media;

- insists on the Council of Europe's role as a prime mover collaborating with other international European bodies, both governmental and non-governmental, to ensure that the new broadcasting opportunities opened up by future satellite launches by European countries lead to the setting-up of one or more European network taking programmes resulting from sustained co-production activity and facilitating, through translation system, the exchange of broadcasts reflecting the special features of each of the European countries;

- stresses the essential part played by broadcasting companies, as purveyors of television, radio or teletext material, in catering for the expression of national and regional socio-cultural realities and, internationally, for balanced and diversified exchanges;

- recommends that existing broadcasting institutions in Council of Europe member states intensify their efforts to decentralise structures and resources, paying due heed to the evolution of each country's political institutions and regulations so as to promote cultural democracy, in relation to electronic communications;

- recommends that these institutions give prominence to original artistic creativity by making more extensive use of it and fostering its democratic dissemination;

- stresses that the public should exercise a right of oversight and participate in the management of broadcasting institutions through representative consultative committee, access to and involvement in production, or legally constituted listeners' and viewers' associations, this public participation being provided for and protected by laws guaranteeing the public availability of information and facilities for discussion between the public and the management bodies;

- recommends the encouragement and development of local radio and television ventures under the auspices of broadcasting institutions or public and private associations and with strict adherence to the principles of service to the public and political and commercial independence;

- recommends the setting-up of local and regional audio-visual resource centres to accommodate and support independent action by individuals and socio-cultural groups, by providing information, training, production and dissemination resources and involving the users in their management;

- hopes that professionals in the electronic communication field, while producers in their own right, will also be recognised as intermediaries and promote understanding and use of the electronic media, particularly by those suffering from the most acute socio-cultural deprivation;

- requests that schools, notably by bringing in electronic communications practitioners, play a fundamental role in training in the use of the electronic media, to enable citizens effectively to exercise the right to communicate;
- recommends that national and regional funds financed from various sources be set up and their resources re-distributed fairly among the various projects;
- urges that such funds should be managed by representatives of the various currents of political and intellectual thought in the country or region concerned;
- emphasises that such funding should derive from licence fees, new public services such as information, reservation, data bank or pay television facilities paid for by the users, cultural reallocations of profits from commercial management of broadcasting institutions (with strict legislation to prevent advertising from influencing programmes) or taxing the profits earned by the electronic communication industries.

The Luxembourg Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs did not adopt this draft as presented above. Instead, it adopted a text of far more limited scope, referring to most of the material in the above text in the guise of the conclusions of Project No. 6, and inviting the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to continue its efforts in this direction and to encourage further study.

APPENDIX II

List of Participants

Chairman:

M. Henry Ingberg	Directeur du projet, Chef du Cabinet du Ministre responsable de l'audio-visuel, Ministère de la Communauté française, Service Audio-visuel, 28 Galerie Ravenstein, B-1000 Bruxelles

Participants:

M. Maurice Abitbol	President de R.T.A. 13 rue Sergent Benoît, B-5001 Belgrade
M. Paul Beaud	Premier Assitant à l'Université de Lausanne, Institut de Sociologie des Moyens de Communication de masse, 19 avenue Vinet, CH-1004 Lausanne
M. René Berger	Directeur-Conservateur du Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 16 avenue Tissot, CH-1006 Lausanne
Mrs Monica Boethius	Programm Director, The Swedish Local Radio Broadcasting Corporation, Box 556, S-101 27 Stockholm
Mr M A J Butler	Assistant Secretary in charge of the Constitutional and Technical Planning Policy Division of the Broadcasting Department in the Home Office, Queen Ann's Gate, London, Great Britain
M. Giovanni Cesareo	Directeur de la Revue "Ikon" Via Cardinale Federico 7, I-20123 Milano

M.R. Devez	157 Quai des Ardennes, B-4000 Liège
M. Luis Simoes Cardoso do Vale	Coordenator Tecnico-administrativo da Secretaria de Estado da Cultura, Av. Almirante Reis 228, P-1000 Lisboa
Mrs Karin Englund	Ministry of Education, Division of the Press and the Media, S-103 33 Stockholm
Mme Clara Fernandez-Castrillo	Chef de la Section de Cooperation internationale, Ministère de la Culture, Av. Generalissimo 39, Madrid
Mr Desmond Fischer	Director of Broadcasting Development, Irish Broadcasting Review, R.T.E. Irl-Dublin 4
M. Roberto Grandi	Professeur à l'Université de Bologne, Via del Porto 10, I-40 122 Bologne
M. Helmut Greulich	Editor, Zweites Deutches Fernsehen, Postfach 4040, D-65 Mainz I
M. Peter Hueber	Video-Initiative Graz, Heinrichstrasse 41, A-8010 Graz
Mrs Margareta Ingelstam	Productrice, Sveriges Utbildningsradio A.B., S- 115 80 Stockholm
M. Fred Van Leeuwen	Staff Executive, Nederlandse Omroep, Stichting, ROOH, Brusselseweg 475, NL-Maastricht
Mr Peter Lewis	Lecturer, University of London, Goldsmith's College, 33a King Henry's Road, GB - London SW3
Mme Holde Lhoest	Chef de service à la Direction générale de la R.T.B.F., Emissions françaises, Boulevard Auguste Reyers 52, B-1040 Bruxelles
M.J-P Marhenda	Chargé d'enseignement à l'Institut français de presse et des sciences de l'information, 83 bis rue Notre-Dame des Champs, F-75006 Paris

M. Renato Parascandolo	R.A.I., Via Confalonieri 2, I-00195 Rome
Sr Sean MacReamoinn	Head of External Affairs, Radio Telefis Eireann, Eire - Dublin
M. Jacques Rigaud	Président-Directeur général de Ediradio (R.T.L.) 22 rue Bayard F-75008 Paris
M. Claude Roussel	Inspecteur général de Communication, 69 rue de Varenne, F-75007 Paris
Mme Monique Sauvage	Recherche prospective, Institut National de l'Audio-visuel, 4 avenue de l'Europe, F-94360 Bry-sur-Marne
Mme Christiane Schlötzer	Publizistin Müllerstrasse 10, D-8000 München 5
M. Benno Signitzer	Institut für Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaften, Universität Salzburg, Sigmund Hafner-Gasse 18, A-5020 Salzburg
M. Martti Soramäki	Special Planner of the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, Secretary General of the Radio and Television Committee, Kesakatu 2, SF-00260 Helsinki 26
Mr Michael Starks	British Broadcasting Coporation, GB-London
M. Stéfanizzi	Délégué du Saint-Siège, Rome
M. Jean-Loup Vichniac	Délégué, Office Culturel de l'Audio-visuel, 11 rue Galilée, F-75016 Paris
M. Hernandez Villaamil	Expert en moyens audio-visuels, Instituto de Radio y Television, Carretera de la Dehesa de la Billa s/n, E-Madrid
M. Raymond Weber	Vice-Président du Conseil de la Coopération culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe, Directeur des Relations culturelles, Maison de Cassal, 5 rue Large, L-Luxembourg

Observers:

M. Bernard Blin	TF1, 17 rue de l'Arrivée, F-75015 Paris
M. Martin Dyfverman	Radio-Hrebro, Box 400, S-70105 Hrebro
M. Jean-Frédéric Laignoux	R.T.B.F., 52 Bd A. Reyers, B-1040 Bruxelles
M. Joop Voogd	Député, Rapporteur de la Commission de la Culture et de l'Education, Heussenstraat 18, NL-2023, Haarlem JR
M. Lars-Eke von Vulte	Radio Kristianstad, Box 505, S-291 25 Kristianstad
M. Jean-Pierre Winberg	No Télé (télévision communautaire), Château de la Buissonnière, B-7520 Vaulx-lez-Tournai

Organising Committee:

Council of Europe	Mlle Antonella Cagnolati, M. Jean Raty
Ministry of the French-language Community	M. Willy Bastin, Mme France Debray, Mlle Chantal Deltenre, Mme Françoise Bourtembourg, M. Michel Jocquet, Mme Myriam Lenoble, M. Claude Mertens et M. Daniel Sotiaux

With assistance from

Directorate of Social Affairs	M. Mayence, M. Rozen
TEAC	M. Francamore, M. Leto, Mme Marie Sandron
Secretaries	Mme Patricia Fasano, Mme Lily Motte, Mme Béatrice Sauvageot
Translator	Mme Paule Catherine
Interpreters	M. Cyril Bahler, Mme Gil Chatterton, Mme Gastaud, M. Saivret
Hostesses	Mme Hanssen, Mme Klinger, Mme Sanchez Mme Langlet

o

o o